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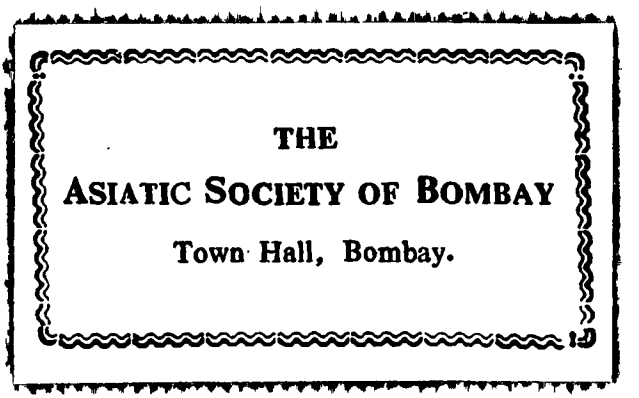

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WILD SPORTS

IN

EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA.

ILLUSTRATED BY

DRAWINGS TAKEN FROM NATURE.

BY

LT.-COLONEL E. NAPIER,

(LATE 46th REGIMENT,)

AUTHOR OF "SCENES AND SPORTS IN FOREIGN LANDS,"

"EXCURSIONS ALONG THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN,"

"REMINISCENCES OF SYRIA," ETC.

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"Still can my soul in Fancy's mirror view
Deeds glorious once, recall the joyous scene
In all its splendours deck'd, o'er the full bowl
Recount my triumphs past, urge others on
With hand and voice, and point the winding way:
Pleased with that social sweet garrulity
The poor *dishanded Veteran's* sole delight!"

SOMERVILLE

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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SPORTING ADVENTURES

IN

EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA.

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MALTA.—A FORAY IN FORT MANUEL.

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CHAPTER I.

MALTA.—A FORAY IN FORT MANUEL.

"Adieu ! adieu ! to Lavalette,
Adieu ! Sirocco, sun and sweat ;
Adieu ! those cursed flights of stairs,
Up which a man so often swears," &c. &c.

BYRON.

"FROM the summit of the Observatory, which commands the Palace of the Grand-Master, is to be obtained a general and sweeping view of the cities, the harbours, and the country of Malta—a landscape colourless, and as the desert naked and boundless—a city similar to the shell of a tortoise cast upon a rock—one would imagine it to have been carved from a single block of the solid stone on which it rests." Such is the most faithful part of Lamartine's account of Malta: but who,—having viewed

some of the other portions of his over-drawn and over-coloured picture of this desolate, burnt, and barren rock,—but would fancy it a terrestrial paradise, where nought could be wanting to the happy mortal whose fate had carried him to this pretended abode of earthly bliss!

Alas! alas! that travellers will sometimes be writers—writers, poets—and that poets will occasionally colour the most gloomy landscape with all the sunny tints of the rainbow! However, sunny tints are certainly not misplaced here, for during the greater part of his yearly course, bright Phœbus bestows most liberally his fiery glances on this Daughter of the Ocean, whose kindliest breezes oft fail to breathe on the feverish Melita anything like a comfortable temperature. In short, Malta may be most aptly compared to a vast stone-mason's yard, where dust and din, fragments of stone, with an unsupportable glare—all unite to annoy the casual visitor, to fry the very eyes out of his head; and nought remains to complete the happy state of body and mind but a few puffs

of the sirocco, which also occasionally favours him with its burning breath.

Such were my impressions after repeated visits to Malta,—from which every time did I escape with increased feelings of pleasure; though it is but fair to say that those visits always took place during the summer months; a period when it must appear to the traveller under the most unfavourable point of view.

That monster power, "Steam,"—annihilating as it were both time and distance,—now carries the invalid in the space of a few days from our foggy, though verdant isle, to the cloudless skies and blue waters of the Mediterranean. It is on such occasions that the barren aridity of Malta is most sensibly felt,—with the remembrance of green meadows, waving foliage, and gurgling streams—with comfort, competence, and neatness, still fresh in the mind — the Exile is landed at the Nix Mangiari stairs, in a grilling hot day in June; and whilst the visual powers are fried out of their sockets by the intolerable glare of a fierce sun, reflected from the white roads and still whiter

buildings, his ears are assailed by the most barbarous and unintelligible of jargons—a medley of every language—from the guttural Arabic to the soft-sounding Italian; but, like an indiscriminate mixture made up from dregs of the most delicious liquors, forming a *tout ensemble* of the vilest nature.

Our traveller at last escapes from this Babel of voices—from the ragged beggars and bronzed cut-throat looking ruffians—who, in angry tones and gesticulations fierce, are contending for the honour of bearing away his baggage. After elbowing through crowds of boatmen, mendicants, *caléséros*, and *faquinos*, whilst making—as he imagines—a fair start, the poor perspiring and fainting wretch (maybe a consumptive invalid) has no idea of the "up-hill" work still before him, and that,—like young Bruin,—he has yet all his sorrows to come.

He dives under the first archway leading to the city of Lavalette, and next stumbles on misery in every shape and posture: half naked wretches, mutually performing with one hand on both heads and persons the charitable

offices of hunting for and destroying vermin, tender the other for him to relieve their wants. He crosses the draw-bridge, and in the moat sees—here, oh rare, and wished-for sight!—some signs of verdure; but, even the plants he looks upon are strangers; or, should he be an old offender in the way of travel, they may prove long-forgotten friends, and he stops for a second to contemplate the Date-tree and Plantain,—the thorny Cactus and blooming Caper plant,* the latter gracefully shooting from the embattled walls, and breaking their stiff outline with the masses of its dark green leaves and gay flowers.

Whilst his thoughts are carried off by these tropical reminiscences, maybe to distant and long past scenes, the next step he takes recalls them to home, as he proudly contemplates the martial bearing, the upright form, and clean, soldier-like appearance of the British sentinel,

* It is here one of the privileges of the chief engineer officer, that he alone is allowed to "cut capers" on the walls of the fortifications.

who guards the entrance to this—one of the most important strongholds of England's foreign possessions.

But now commences the "up-hill" work, and as ascending those "cursed flights of stairs," he recollects Byron, and halting mid-way up the steep ascent,

"Wipes the dew-drops from his reeking brow,"

he mentally recalls the lines in question, whilst casting a wondering glance at some of those nun-like mysterious forms, which, — closely shrouded in ample drapery of black silk, — glide gracefully and noiselessly past. However, he will soon find the dark-eyed daughters of Melita are no more vestals than their neighbours; and though the "mystical faldette" may conceal a thousand charms, it may be covers as many frailties.

Our traveller's troubles are, however, for the present nearly at an end. Having brought him thus far from his fatherland, we may deposit him safely at Clarence's excellent

hotel, whilst we give some account of the reception, on this iron-bound and wave-worn shore, of those adventurous spirits who, after long years of exile in the far east, are—with pale, mahogany, or yellow faces—returning to take a renewed lease of their lives and livers, by the overland passage home.

Before, however, their eyes are gladdened with the sight of Albion's cliffs, a tedious ordeal is to be gone through, the more irksome to those who, from long absence and banishment, are now anxious speedily to revisit the friends of their youth and kindred of their affections. This is a long quarantine, whose laws are indeed the only drawback to the overland passage, which is now performed with such celerity; but it is an evil not to be avoided, and which it has been my fate on several occasions to endure.

The vessel, deeply freighted with this cargo of supposed death in the concentrated form of plague, is—with a dirty-looking yellow flag at the mast-head—securely moored in the quarantine harbour. If fortunate, the passengers and

their baggage are landed at Fort Manuel,* into which, being duly marched under the superintendence of Captain Cazolani — who himself keeps at a most respectful distance— they are allotted off to different apartments, the accommodation and convenience of which depend on the number of those performing quarantine; as in some instances there are several of different dates taking place at the same time in the fort, when a good deal of crowding unavoidably occurs. On one occasion, I remember being incarcerated in the same cell with two brother prisoners, but being of the "cloth," *bons enfans*, and one, moreover, an old schoolfellow whom I had not met for many years, we got up a capital military mess, and managed in our barrack-room — which, by-the-bye, was a regular bomb-proof—to pass our one-and-twenty days very pleasantly.

* There are two buildings or lazarettos where quarantine is enforced, the most airy and roomy of the two being Fort Manuel, and of both of these establishments Captain Cazolani has the superintendence.

What displeased us most was being every evening at nine o'clock put under lock and key by our inexorable old Guardiano.* Several schemes were devised to evade this, but to no purpose. At last, on an attentive survey of the premises, we found that a drop, of a very few feet from our window, would let us down on a thick wall running round the outer range of the building, and from which we might easily descend to *terra firma*.

With a smile we heard, on that evening, the key grate in the lock of our prison door, as old Cerberus pronounced his *felice notte, Signori;* and gaily did we descant over our grog and cigars of the adventures we were to encounter in our proposed nocturnal expedition, the object of which was still very undefined, except perhaps to prove to the captain of the quarantine and his myrmidons that our

* To every separate batch of travellers performing quarantine a "Guardiano" is appointed, whose duty is to afford them attendance, and likewise to see that they do not infringe any of the quarantine laws.

freeborn spirits were not to be restrained by either bolt or bar.

The "busy hum of cities" was fast dying away, and succeeded by silence—that twin-sister of darkness and midnight—when, cautiously raising the lattice, we, with unshod feet, allowed ourselves to drop on the parapet below. As we cautiously crept along, our attention was attracted by the faint rays of a glimmering light issuing from the apartment contiguous to our own, and in the same range of buildings. This tenement, occupied by a motley group, had long excited our interest and curiosity, from the strange appearance of its inmates — men, women, and children— Grecks, Maltese, and Calabrians—whose unintelligible and multifarious jargon was well matched by the bronzed bandit look of the men, and the dark, shrivelled, witch-like countenances of the females composing this interesting party.

Cautiously advancing in single file along the narrow parapet towards the light, our footsteps guided by the faint uncertain rays

of a waning moon thickly enshrouded in clouds, the foremost of the party at last gained the casement; a pause ensued, but curiosity prevailed; the leader of the band, carefully balancing and supporting himself, was preparing to pry into mysteries till then concealed from view; his extended hand was stretched forth to grasp the projecting cornice, when suddenly it came in contact with something cold, clammy, and death-like. At this instant the moon, till now nearly obscured, shone faintly through her vapoury veil, and dimly disclosed the ensanguined folds of a white drapery deeply stained with "gouts o' blood," and partly concealing some object, which, by the dim-wavering light, had much the appearance of a human head severed from the trunk, and still reeking with clotted gore!

Horror-stricken, the "leader" paused, and with difficulty repressed an exclamation of surprise, which would have betrayed his presence to the supposed throat-cutting gang

within; but, as has been said, the party were old campaigners, and it was not the first time that each had been placed in unforeseen dilemmas. A retreat was first sounded, and a council of war held, when it was resolved to obtain possession of the mysterious object in question.

This was soon effected. We regained, with some little difficulty, our stronghold; the mysterious and blood-stained mass was placed on the table, the crimson folds removed, and to our astonished gaze, presented—what thinkest thou, reader?—a fine fresh round of beef!

As we stood gaping at each other in mute surprise, it is difficult to say whether disappointment or pleasure predominated in our breasts—disappointment, at having a mystery crushed in the very bud; pleasure, as in anticipation we broiled, and grilled, and devilled our prey in every possible manner that culinary torture could devise; for, strange to say, the savoury fumes of a good supper were the first visions which presented themselves to

our heated imaginations, after they had been disappointed in their feast of horrors, raw heads, and bloody bones.

As to the lawfulness of such a proceeding, our military consciences were perfectly easy on that score: the beef was plunder, and plunder it had always been deemed legal to appropriate, by the captors, for the most useful purposes.

We had lots of liquor, and it was therefore voted *nem. con.* that we should have a glorious "blow out." But, as if to prove the fragile nature of the thread on which hang all human resolutions, our magnanimous resolve was extinguished in its very birth by "want of fuel." In vain did we ransack every corner; not a particle of wood or charcoal could we find: our very bedsteads were of iron, or I verily believe they would have been sacrificed at the shrine of this new Apis.

However, there being no *rimedio*, as we say in Spain—although the whole trio of us had been great travellers—still, not having included Abyssinia in our wanderings, nor studied the *gastronomie* of Bruce, and there-

fore not relishing raw beef, we held a fresh consultation as to how, under the present state of things, we should dispose of spoils thus thrown into our hands by the fortune of war.

My companions had both passed many years in that sunny clime, from which, if a man does escape, he generally bears with him long enduring marks in the shape of a mahogany face and dried liver, with sundry other happy concomitants. Now, these mahogany-faced and dry-livered gentlemen are generally provided with an inseparable companion, called a medicine-chest, well stored with pills, powders, draughts, and other devilry; and my friends, voting all these ingredients to be no longer of any use on their approaching return to Old England, and having moreover observed the extremely bilious appearance of the party in general to whom *had* appertained the round of beef, were of opinion, that, could all the contents of the said medicine-chest be,—through the medium of the said round of beef,—conveyed into the stomachs of the aforesaid bilious looking personages, such a pill would, in addition

to the merit of originality, be attended with the most beneficial consequences, and might tend greatly to the improvement and amelioration of the human race, in those several divisions of the globe coming under the denominations of Greece, Malta, and Calabria.

To this wise and charitable proposition there not being a single dissenting voice, operations were forthwith commenced. The medicine-chests were soon converted into a "beggarly display of empty boxes," whilst calomel pills, James's powders, rhubarb, and jalap, were a little astonished at being made acquainted with each other,—not in the tenement originally destined for their temporary abode—a sick man's stomach; but in the plump and juicy mass, where they were most sociably amalgamated together with the help of our "fleshed swords," which, after dealing on the poor round of beef deep and ghastly wounds, which, "like dumb mouths did ope their ruby lips," we concluded the task with filling those gashes deep, by cramming into them all the different ingredients above mentioned. After

having thus converted this delicate morsel into a complete Pandora's box, it was restored to its bloody cerements, and carefully replaced *al fresco*, on the identical peg from which we had removed it. Perfectly satisfied with their night's work, the party retired to rest—"perchance to dream"—on the expected result of their operations.

The following morning passed as usual:—breakfast, a pipe, a walk on the terrace overlooking the harbour, with books and drawing—occupied the forenoon. The dinner hour of our neighbours we knew to be mid-day; after which we impatiently waited to see the result of our cookery, where "good digestion" had evidently stepped hard on the heels of appetite; for, after a most indistinct and confused gabble of strange tones, evidently indicative of something wrong, we beheld a general rush of men, women, and children towards a given point, which left not the shadow of a doubt as to the success of our medicinal practice.

Presently, Guardianos were running to and fro in every direction; the doctor was called;

Captain Cazolani's portly form appeared, backed by his lieutenant; and, lastly, the traiteur, cook, and all the "Marmitons" of the establishment were summoned; for, after the first alarm of plague had subsided, it appeared to be the universal opinion that the fault must lie at *their* door. Verdigris—copper—filth—poison—and purgation, were hoarsely murmured through the crowd, to the dismay of the trembling disciples of Mrs. Glasse, who looked as though their last hour had arrived. Pots and pans, pastry-moulds and soup-kettles were *instanter* paraded, but triumphantly bore the most minute inspection. The Doctor looked puzzled, the Captain grave and pensive, the traiteur, cook, and Marmitons indignantly triumphant; but all and every one except ourselves concluded it to be a most strange and untoward event; and, as may be easily supposed, we did not express an opposite opinion.

As storms and the raging of the elements are generally conducive to a clear and sunshiny atmosphere, so did the little internal commotion which had taken place appear to

have acted on our strange neighbours; at least, judging on the following day from their sprightly looks and clear complexions, which were now one degree further removed from mahogany than we had ever beheld them. However, the approaching termination of our captivity did not enable us to judge whether the result answered to these favourable prognostications, or empower us to administer a repetition of the dose: everything in this sublunary world has an end, and so likewise has a "one-and-twenty days quarantine" in the Lazaretto of Fort Manuel.

Reader, if thou hast never been so incarcerated, thou canst not know the pleasures of such a release; and, for once in thy life, 'twill be well worth thy while to expose thyself to "plague, pestilence, and sudden death," that thou mayest truly enjoy the delights of freedom on escaping from a "Lazaretto."

Never did school-boy reckon the approaching period of the long wished-for vacation more ardently; never did amorous swain count with greater impatience the minutes

which must elapse ere he clasps in his longing arms the object of his thoughts; nor did the wave-worn mariner ever more wistfully contemplate a near approach to his long absent native shores, than did we poor plague-scathed captives view our emancipation from this "winter of our discontent."

But, alas, how fleeting are all the pleasures of this life! Hope appears to be the only blessing we can enjoy; for, no sooner is her vapoury rainbow-course levelled by the footsteps of Possession, than thousands of gay and perfumed flowers, the bright and air-born creatures of our thoughts, are crushed beneath her heavy tread; and the twin-sisters, Happiness and Content,—scared by the sad havoc,—take a speedy flight to distant, unknown, and unexplored regions!

* * * * *

Of all places in the world, I have always thought the "military hot-house," Lavalette, the worst calculated to create an interest in, or fix the attention of the stranger. In the shape of society, a stay in this former citadel

of Holy Chivalry, now merely presents to the British traveller a repetition of life in a garrison or seaport town at home, and that the most uninteresting, and tedious one in existence. Groups of officers, naval and military, idly lounging at the corner of a street, as they review the scandal and gossip of the day; the accoutred sentinel on duty; the smart, spruce corporal hurrying past with orderly-book in hand; or occasionally a happy looking tar, his "flippers" listlessly stuck in the waistband of his breeches, as with devious tacks he makes his way up Strada Reale—forcibly recall scenes familiar to the eye, at Portsmouth, Plymouth, or Chatham. Nor does the resemblance cease with troops and shipping, jollies, soldiers, sailors, and such visible and external objects: go to a dinner-party, ball, or concert, and still the same thick coating of "tar" and "pipe-clay" transports you in imagination to those delightful sites which a few hours run per "rail" from your club-house door, would have enabled you to reconnoitre without facing the dangers and perils of the deep—saying nothing

of ten or twelve days durance in a moveable steam-dungeon; for in that respect we wonderfully coincide in opinion with that learned person, the sapient Johnson.*

When a man leaves his own fire-side, and travels to "foreign parts," it is natural for him to wish to see and become acquainted with the manners and customs of the people amongst whom he is thrown; and nothing so far conduces to this, as,—in the first place,—a knowledge of the language, and, secondly, a constant social intercourse with the natives.

As to the former, Malta would present great facilities—the Italian language, which in these days of travel nearly every one is conversant with, being the general medium of communication amongst the higher classes; but almost insuperable difficulties exist in obtaining the *entrée* to a "Smitch" residence.†

Of these, the principal are pride and po-

* Sam Johnson's definition of a ship was: "a jail," with a chance of drowning.

† "Smitch" is the nickname by which the Maltese are, from some unknown cause, frequently designated.

verty, nearly every Maltese family being of "soi-disant" noble extraction. There is no end to Counts and Marquises; but, unfortunately, their rent-rolls do not exactly correspond with their high-sounding titles; and, although living in palaces, the latter are,—if report speak true,—scarcely furnished, and most scantily supplied with even the common necessaries of life.

These circumstances, together with that sad want of the *suaviter in modo* for which our countrymen are proverbial, is probably the cause why so little is known as to the real state, not of "society in Malta," but of "Maltese society," which would, at all events, possess the charm of novelty to recommend it.

As has been already stated, this was not my first visit to Malta: its attractions—such as they are—presented therefore nothing new. A few morning lounges into the beautiful church of St. John, at the still and cooling hour when the dark mystic faldette is seen in its most graceful attitude—that of prayer; a few strolls in the Florian Gardens; a few days

of dust, and glare, and heat, soon made me heartily tired of Lavalette; and one fine "sunshiny" morning, (what a God-send would a few vapoury clouds have been then considered!) bundling myself and carpet-bag into a *calèche*, I soon got under weigh, bound for the ancient capital of the Island, "Citta Vecchia," still more anciently known as "El Medina" in Arabic—"*The* Town," *par excellence*.

CHAPTER II.

CITTA VECCHIA.—THE ROAD, THE TURF, AND THE CHASE AT MELITA.

Citta Vecchia—A Maltese Calèche—Its appointments—Horses at Malta—Racing there—The Piétà—Barbs—The "Campagna" of Malta—Its parched-up appearance—The Harvest—Eastern customs—Fruit—Casals—Dense population—Monks and Friars—The aqueduct from Boschetto—A party of sailors—Arrival at Citta Vecchia—Fra Luis Griech—A literary friend—Signor Francisco il Cacciadore—An old Knight of Malta.

CHAPTER II.

CITTA VECCHIA.—THE ROAD, THE TURF, AND THE CHASE AT MELITA.

"The royal car at early dawn obtain,
And order mules obedient to the rein;
For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,
Where their fair vests *Ogygian* virgins lave."
POPE'S *Odyssey, Book* 6.

CITTA VECCHIA stands on an elevated site almost in the centre of the Island of Malta, and about seven or eight miles from Lavalette, whence I had just taken my departure, to pass as I best might, the time which must elapse ere a steamer should bear me from its glowing precincts, which always reminded me of a smoking limekiln, with the concomitant glare, and heat, and white pulverized dust.

Having been—as before stated—comfortably installed into that general medium of conveyance here: a *calèche*, we may as well give the uninitiated reader a short description of this extraordinarily constructed, though peculiarly convenient locomotive.

Imagine not—ye Knights of the whip and ribands! ye Members of the Four-in-hand Club!—that a start for a journey at Malta in any way resembles a similar move either from the Bull and Mouth, or the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly. Picture not to your heated imagination the compact and well-appointed vehicle, the dapper coachman, the shining harness, and well-fed team, which—as the magic word "all right" is pronounced—start like firebolts from under the warm rugs, which—sole records of their presence—are now left waving in charge of the obsequious ostlers; whilst, appearing to devour both space and distance, the high mettled steeds tear off as if on the wings of the wind.

In no one particular does the Maltese *calèche* resemble these earthly meteors. Pic-

ture to yourself, most sapient reader, a lineal descendant of the vehicle which conveyed Madame Noah and family to the ark—or one of its Phœnician ancestors at the time of the siege of Tyre by that "great Conqueror," Alexander—or a cousin-german of My Lord Mayor's coach, stuck on two wheels instead of four—and you may form some idea, though a very faint one, of these antique-looking chariots, which are nevertheless particularly adapted to the locality, and the nature of the duty required of them.

The "ground-work" of one of these constructions consists, first, of a pair of enormous wheels some six feet at the least in diameter: these, supporting an axle running completely *abaft*, or at the sternmost extremity of a pair of immeasurably long shafts, form one *point d'appui*, of which the horse or mule becomes the other—and support the body of the carriage, a large cumbersome sort of abode, occasionally of sufficient capacity to locate four inside, and suspended by leathern thongs to a very poor apology for springs.

From the length of the shafts, and the axle being situated so much behind, the horse is placed very far from his work; but this disadvantage is perhaps counterbalanced by the little weight he consequently is made to bear, which, with a two-wheeled vehicle, is matter of some importance over roads occasionally running down the most precipitous declivities.

As to the cattle and their appointments, the latter are "much of a muchness" with the shandry-dan—more dust than polish—and a strong rope occasionally supplying the place of leathern trace or shining buckle: a hempen halter generally does duty for bridle; and an enormous saddle to support the shafts invariably forms part of the horse's accoutrements.

All these "appliances and means" would to an amateur of the box be sad eye-sores; but what would no doubt be more distressing to his feelings, were it ever his fate to conduct one of these vehicles in "the way it should go," is, that he would neither hold the reins of command nor the sceptre of state: one gloved hand would be unconscious of the well-gathered

ribands, whilst the other remained equally innocent of the bending whalebone and silken lash.

"I suppose, then," says coachee, "that these ere chaps rides postillion-fashion over the shafts, as there's only one orse to the fly."—Sold again, old fellow! out in your calculation, if such be your learned conjecture. Try again—give it up, eh?—Well then, old "Jehu," undeceive yourself; for although the thermometer stands at 90° in the shade, and red-hot water in the sun, you are not even allowed the comfort of bestriding the shafts—not a bit of it: off, therefore, with your belchers and upper benjamins; strip to your work; take the hempen cord appended to the head of the long-eared beast of a mule, in your hand, touch him up in the raw with the slack end of the same, and as he goes off at a good round trot, you may stretch your hitherto cramped limbs, by stepping out manfully on your ten toes; sometimes—by way of variety—actively springing up on one shaft, but most generally trotting alongside of your team!

By the lash of Phaeton! 'twould be worth a trip across seas to witness some of our full-conditioned old stage-coachees practising these gymnastics; but porter would soon be "riz" in Lavalette, and every public shortly run dry!

As to the cattle employed, they consist sometimes of remarkably large and strong mules, but more generally (for hired *calèches*) of broken down and broken-knee'd old Barbs, which, being originally brought from the opposite coast of Tunis, and had the shine taken out of them by Officers of the Garrison, have, after running the gauntlet of Middies and Jollies, at last attained their present enviable situation.

Whilst on the subject of horse-flesh, we may as well take a glance at the crack stables of Lavalette,—unquestionably those of the military,—who manage twice a year to get up what are called races; but for exploits of the *turf* we must not look to a place where not a square foot of that article is to be found in the whole Island; where the only race-course (the

Piétà),—about half a mile in length,—is over a stratum of hard rock, with a sharp turning, which has caused innumerable accidents and mishaps; and where it is impossible any time can be kept, or the powers of any horse duly appreciated.

However, some very fine Barbs are yearly imported from Africa, for which long prices are frequently given, and which—although certainly not Nedjdees—shew a vast deal of blood and breeding, particularly in their well-formed heads, expanded nostrils, small muzzle, and large eyes full of fire.

As for *racing* at Malta, the idea is too farcical to be for a moment entertained: the *horse-running*, as occasionally practised by the "Smitches" on this said splendid course of the Piétà, is much more adapted to the locality, and possesses at least the charm of novelty, as it is rather an unusual thing at Epsom or Newmarket to see the "high-mettled courser" brought, without either saddle or bridle, to the post, from which half-a-dozen will, in this state of nature, start off hurry-scurry

for the cup, and,—as may be supposed,—many is the tumble met with in this Mazeppa-like course; though *that* is not exactly the suitable term.

But Malta is certainly not the region of the sportsman: dogs and horses, guns and spears, are here quite out of place; and the unfortunate wight, whose miserable fate is to be immured in this military hot-house, and whose musical perceptions may, in former days, have been oft cheered by the sweet call of horn and bay of hound, must now, poor fellow, even content himself with the twang of the guitar or the squalling of an opera-dancer!

But we have strangely bolted off the course of our former progress: return we therefore to the high road of Citta Vecchia, where we left our *calèche* steadily on the advance.

With a driver on foot, a broken-down piece of blood, so near the gallows as to be already decorated with a halter—for, as has been observed, our proud animal disdained the bit—and dragging moreover behind him such a ponderous mass of wood and iron, it cannot be

matter of surprise if we did not progress exactly at railroad speed: however, the slowness of our pace had the advantage of affording time and opportunity to observe the country we passed through.

But *country* is not a word applicable to the "campagna" of Malta; by "country" we picture to ourselves—at least Englishmen do—verdant or golden fields, the shady copse, the grove of stately elms behind which slowly curls up, and is lost in ether the blue vapoury smoke of the thatched, woodbined, and snug little cottage—the whole scene enlivened by the blithe song of blackbird and thrush, the lowing of well-fed kine, or the light carols of their tutelar deity—the rosy-cheeked milkmaid, as she joyously proceeds to her daily task.

How different the picture now placed before the dazzled and aching sight! I have wandered over the bleak and dreary heaths and mosses of the North, toiled through the boundless jungles of the East, and beheld the mirage on the burning deserts of Lybia; but nowhere did I ever witness "desolation" more strongly

stamped on earth's fair features than in this "wilderness of walls," in these "dry and stony" places, where the eye vainly seeks for a spot of verdure or a single variety of landscape to rest upon.

Picture to yourself a broiling and almost tropical sun, the intensity of whose glare causes every object to dance amidst the dazzling coruscations of what appears to be a stream of mingled air and fire—imagine its rays falling on the white and dusty surface of a road, which for months has not tasted a falling drop from heaven—fancy this road running for miles and miles between dead walls varying in height from five to ten feet—walls extending endlessly on your right—walls stretching interminably on your left—between whose heated sides lies baked and simmered, the brown dry surface of the scanty soil,—fancy all this, and you will have some idea of the landscape of Malta!

The crops—although early in June—had mostly been gathered in, yet we had an opportunity of witnessing the process of harvesting

a few fields of late barley. This is done,—not either with scythe or sickle, but by dragging up the plants from the roots, which are next thickly strewed on the ground; when the grain is trodden out by oxen, and afterwards separated from the chaff. A little attention to the rural customs of most nations will generally afford a clue to their origin, and here an Eastern derivation is too strongly marked to be for an instant mistaken. In Andalusia,* Barbary, Egypt, and the whole Levant, this mode of harvesting is still prevalent, as mentioned in the Scriptures, and also by old Homer.†

But if I said that *no* verdure was to be seen in these Elysian fields, I wrong their parched-up, dusty fame. Even at this burning season the cotton-plant began to shew its tiny head above the baked soil, and the cactus or prickly pear—if it did not bestow a deep or cooling shade on the small square-terraced

* Referring to the occupation of this part of Spain by the Moors.

† Iliad, xx. 578.

roofed and stone-built cottages—afforded to the frugal and easily satisfied peasant, a wholesome and refreshing fruit, of which I believe there is a great consumption in the Island, where,—although apparently under such inauspicious circumstances,—the reign of Pomona nevertheless is in a flourishing state. Besides the cactus, may be reckoned the fig, the grape, the melon, and orange; whilst the Lavalette markets are always abundantly supplied with these, and all other provisions from the opposite coast of Sicily, to which even open boats daily run, and whose mountains on a clear day are distinctly visible.

What principally fixes the attention of the stranger in a tour through Malta, is the density of its population, the number of habitations, and the solidity of their construction. The latter circumstance is readily accounted for by the nature of the soil, which is entirely composed of a fine-grained sandstone, easily cut into blocks, so that the materials for building are always at hand, and only require very little labour to be fashioned and put together.

Imagine an oblong block of light-coloured close-grained sandstone, hollowed out into compartments, and bored with a few loop-holes—then you have the picture of a Maltese dwelling, at least of one appertaining to the lower class; flat roof—flat walls—everything flat and angular. Such is the order of architecture. No danger here of being burned out of the premises, except as you would out of a furnace. These little tea-caddies of ovens, thickly sprinkled over the arid face of the campagna, occasionally congregate on each side of the dusty road, and form what is termed "casals," answering to large villages, and often small towns. They are seldom separated by a space exceeding a couple of miles, and generally comprise amongst the inferior buildings many sumptuous palaces, large convents, and noble churches: indeed, the soil appears wonderfully prolific in the two latter, and in no part of the world do I remember to have met with them in such numbers. The people, who from this circumstance ought to be very pious, are superstitious in the extreme, and very intolerant,

in which sentiments they are carefully nourished by that bane of Catholicism, those drones in the beehive of society—the monks and friars,* whose name is here "legion," and who, together with the priests, monopolize the consciences as well as the pockets of their flocks.

On seeing whole herds of these lazy fellows strolling about with the fat greasy look of indolent content, I have often thought it a pity they could not be made liable to a sweeping system of conscription, and how much the drill serjeant might benefit the health of a few hundreds of these—at present—worse than useless members of the community!

* The Queen Dowager, during her residence at Malta, amongst her many other beneficent acts, laid the foundation of a Protestant church, and contributed greatly towards its erection, which went on prosperously under an architect of the name of Lankasheer. The great drought which happened during the summer of 1841, was by the worthy inhabitants immediately attributed to the anger of their patron saints at having their Island thus desecrated by an heretical place of worship; and on the death of the architect, and the foundation of some of the pillars giving way, they hesitated not to express their joy, and to declare it to be a judgment of the Almighty!

The parched aridity of the scanty soil covering the rocky substratum of the island, speaks strongly of the want of water to which it is subject; and, in fact, the general supplies depend on the contents of the tanks, which are filled during the winter season.

A few aqueducts have also been constructed. One is brought the distance of seven miles from the neighbourhood of Boschetto to Lavalette; and, for a considerable way along the road we were pursuing, the water was conducted on the top of the high wall, which, as has been remarked, formed the picturesque boundary of our present landscape.

At one place a fountain had been formed, which was supplied from above; and here were congregated many bipeds as well as quadrupeds, who eagerly imbibed its cool and refreshing waters. My charioteer followed so good an example; nor could I demur at what was a most necessary delay, considering the state of the atmosphere.

I was patiently reclining back until he and his horse had concluded operations, when my

oral faculties were awakened by sounds which left not a doubt as to the vocation of their promoters.

"Avast there, Jack!" cried the voice; "shorten sail and heave to; my craft must water."—"Ay, ay," was the laconic response; and presently three sons of Neptune and a "Jolly,"—the former gentlemen being able, under existing circumstances, to claim very near relationship to the latter—accordingly "bore up," and their nags having taken in the requisite quantity of moisture, were again soon under weigh and out of sight, carrying every stitch of canvas, whilst my *calèche* quietly pursued its steady course, and crept along like an old lighter in the wake of some gallant frigates, the *Jacob Faithful* of the same, being in this instance the pedestrian calesero.

A loud clattering of hoofs from the direction in which we were proceeding at once roused our attention, and suddenly a horse, galloping at a fearful pace over the hard road, and without either rider or bridle, shot past

and left me little doubt of the rapid promotion of one of these sons of the ocean, who must thus unexpectedly been been converted into a "field officer."

My conjectures were soon verified by seeing Jack with the bridle in one hand, and swabbing his dripping and dust-begrimed countenance with the other, as he "carried on" after the chase, which was now hull down, and fast disappearing from his bloodshot eyes.

"Well, my lad, how's this? tumbled overboard, eh?"—

"Ay, your honour," gasped out the breathless tar; "that d—d cranky craft was forging well a-head, when she's suddenly taken as it were quite aback, brings up with a round turn, sends me flying over her figure-head, and here I stand like a lubber, with this ere tow-line in my flipper, whilst she just shews her starn, and then flies off like a squirt o' baccy-juice in a squall."

My friend was evidently not much injured by the fall, so hoping he might soon overhaul the enemy, I wished him good morning, and

shortly found myself slowly toiling up the steep ascent leading to Citta Vecchia, whose solitary and deserted streets now echoed to the unusual sound of wheels, as we drove up to the door of Fra Luis Griech, at whose house, a literary friend* had taken up his abode, and was then engaged in putting together some notes for publication.

My friend, who had chosen this quiet retirement to pursue his studies, had here ample time to meditate, free from the cares and bustle of the external world, and there was nought in this tranquil mansion to divert the current of his thoughts from the channel in which he required them to flow. The establishment consisted of the worthy priest himself—a very old man, who had formerly been in some way attached to the brotherhood of St. John, of which he still wore the order; an ancient maiden sister; and a younger brother called Signor Francisco, but who generally

* Mr. Pattison Hunter, the intelligent author of the "Campaign in Syria," which he was then compiling.

went by the *sobriquet* of "Il Cacciadore," or the hunter.

I was in due form presented to this worthy party, and, as they all spoke Italian, we were soon on the best of terms; and this mode of life appeared to me so far preferable to that at Lavalette, that I resolved, if possible, to adopt it during the remainder of my stay at Malta.

On expressing this wish to the "Cacciadore," with whom a sort of sporting freemasonry had already caused a certain degree of intimacy, he replied, that although they could not accommodate me in the house, he would endeavour to procure for me lodgings in those of a friend who lived hard by.

We accordingly sallied out, and, passing through the noiseless streets of this seeming city of the dead, soon arrived in front of a massive door deeply sunk into a high and solid stone wall. Our application for admittance was responded to by a respectable old matron, who answered in Maltese to the name of Maria; and crossing a small "patio," whose

coolness was increased by numerous fine orange and lemon trees, the blossom of which scented the surrounding atmosphere, we ascended a massive staircase, and soon entered a spacious hall, whose extensive dimensions were encumbered with but little furniture, though the walls were thickly covered with antique paintings.

During the few minutes which elapsed ere the "padrone" made his appearance, I had leisure to reconnoitre the ground. The apartment was of noble proportions, and, probably on the principle of "most unadorned," boasted, with the exception of the aforesaid pictures, of few superfluities. A few high-backed antediluvian-looking chairs—a table, with an inkstand—and some parchment-covered books, whose physiognomy proclaimed them anything but "light reading,"—these, together with an open escritoire, on which stood a crucifix, formed, with a gold-headed cane in one corner, the whole furniture; on which, from their dusty frames, frowned the hard-favoured countenances of a long array of goodly gentle-

men and knights, some encased in steel armour, others peering from above enormous ruffs, but all bearing on their breasts, as a distinctive badge, the octagon cross of Malta.

These worthies, Signor Francisco informed me, were true likenesses, and placed in chronological order—of all the grand masters, from the gallant old Ville Adam to the recreant Homspech; and was proceeding to illustrate the history of each, when he was interrupted by the entrance of a white-headed little gentleman in black, with a low three-cornered hat under his arm, wearing shoes and buckles, silk stockings, and small clothes, and from whose button-hole depended the order of St. John. Never had I beheld a more complete picture of the old school. A nobleman of the time of Queen Anne, or a marquis of the *ancien régime* of France, was here faithfully portrayed; nor could he have been in more complete "keeping" with those faded remains of ancient chivalry which now so grimly looked down upon us through the dust and defacement of ages.

This old gentleman—one of the few remaining specimens of times long gone by—was introduced to me as the Signor ——, the proprietor of the mansion in which we then found ourselves; and his manners did not belie his appearance. On my expressing a wish to become for a short time a denizen of Citta Vecchia, he replied with the greatest politeness, and in pure French, that the house was at my service as far as accommodation went, but that for my board, as he was himself of very frugal habits, he would recommend me to get supplied from a neighbouring inn; a plan which my literary friend had adopted at his own abode, and which he recommended me likewise to pursue.

All this was speedily settled, and in half an hour I found myself comfortably located amongst the champions of the cross, the old knights of St. John; at least, of all that now remains of those who were once the bulwarks of Christendom and terrors of the Paynim.

I found mine host extremely agreeable, and his conversation was to me most instructive

and entertaining. He described himself as having belonged to the order of St. John of Jerusalem; that, on its abolition by the French Directory, he had retired from the world; and now, surrounded by his books and paintings, lived on reminiscences, and hoped shortly to go quietly to his grave. I could not help admiring the resigned philosophy of the poor old "chevalier," nor refrain from pitying his forlorn condition, to which he nevertheless seemed perfectly reconciled.

My intimacy with the "Cacciadore," in the meantime, increased; and as we used to ramble together in the neighbourhood, with those inseparable companions—his dog and gun,—I learnt that, during his youth and early manhood, he had been actively engaged in commercial speculations, which had made him a great navigator and traveller in the east. However, on one occasion, happening to be shipwrecked on the coast of Cyprus, he had had such a narrow escape, and encountered so many hardships, that he resolved to trust himself no longer to the winds or waves, but

determined, with the little remaining property he had left, to pass the rest of his days in quiet retirement, with the solace of the "caccia," or shooting, of which he was passionately fond, for his leisure hours.

Malta, however, is not a field where the sportsman has a very extensive range either in the quality or quantity of his game, the quail being the only bird coming, properly speaking, under that denomination, which is to be found in the island, and these only at certain periods—in the spring, on their passage from Africa across the Mediterranean, and on their return in autumn. They then make their appearance in great numbers, but dreadful is the slaughter which takes place in their serried ranks, as war is waged on them by every "Smitch cacciadore" who can muster anything in the shape of fire-arms, from a blunderbuss to a horse-pistol.

Quail, at the above seasons, a few rabbits, blue pigeons, turtle-doves, blackbirds, and beccaficos, are almost the only living animals to be found here in a wild state. But Signor

Francisco was nowise particular. Everything went towards feeding the game bag—all fish to his net; and when he was unsuccessful in gorging it with the things which fly and creep on the face of mother earth, he disdained not her more passive productions,—and many a handful of tomatas, figs, and oranges, have I seen thrust down the throat of the voracious monster. On expressing my surprise the first time I witnessed this proceeding, he said he made it a rule never to return empty-handed, and that fruit and vegetables were very good substitutes for game.

To this argument there was no replying. However, I ventured to remark that, from so keen a sportsman as himself, I expected to see nobler exploits than unroosting oranges and flooring tomatas, which—otherwise laudable occupation—was not with us included under the head of field sports, and asked him if he could not shew me a little better "caccia."

"Vedremo," said he, scratching his head, as he rested the above-mentioned well filled bag on a low wall, and leant on his rusty

implement of destruction,—"Vedremo, si; yes,—it is certainly late in the season for quail, but they are often to be found at Gozo much later than here. Besides, we might chance to have a little pigeon-shooting amongst the cliffs yonder. If you like, we can take a trip there, together; and I know several people at Rabbato,* whom, it is true I have not seen for many years, but who will, I have no doubt, shew us every civility."

Delighted at the prospect of a trip anywhere, I eagerly clinched the proposal; and the dawn of the following morning saw us,—after hastily swallowing a cup of coffee,—with our dogs and guns, closely packed in a lumbering *calèchè*, and nodding most familiarly to each other, as our heads were occasionally brought into close contiguity, by the repeated joltings of the crazy vehicle over the broken road leading to the western extremity of the island, to which point we were now shaping our course.

* The capital of the island of Gozo.

The scenery,—in no way varying from what has already been described,—continued with the same tiresome and uninterrupted uniformity until we reached St. Paul's Bay, which, with its blue waters and shell-covered shore, bit deeply into this iron-bound and rocky coast. It was here that St. Paul is said to have landed after escaping from shipwreck; and the spot is still shewn,—over which now stands a small chapel—where he lit the fire to dry his dripping garments and those of his companions, when he cast into the flames the viper which had fastened on his hand, and which is said, since then, to have exempted this *favoured* island from the presence of all venemous reptiles.

After following the windings of this romantic and secluded little gulf, the ground became even more rocky, barren, and hilly than heretofore: whilst large terraces of rock occasionally broke the sameness of the eternal stone walls, and under their protecting shade the verdure of a few vines and fig trees sometimes relieved the aching sight.

Crossing a long level sandy beach, after leaving a large red building, called the "Torre Rosso," or Crimson Tower, on our left, we came in sight of our goal, the Islands of Gozo and Comino, and gladly drew up at what for the present was the termination of our journey; the entrance of the Palace of Marfa, situated at the western extremity of Malta.

CHAPTER III.

THE PALACE OF MARFA.

Marfa in former days—The Marquis of Hastings—Rabbits on the Island of Comino—Sans Façon and his family—Maria and Conchetta—A couple of brunettes—Conversation in Arabic—A ramble along the coast—Volcanic appearance—Blue pigeons—The Goatherd's hut—Antonia, the Fisherman's daughter—Sans Façon's supper—Another guest—Battista the Light Bob—Flight of Maria—Felice Notte.

CHAPTER III.

THE PALACE OF MARFA.

"Biancheggia in mar lo scoglio,
Par che vacilli, e pare
Che lo sommerga il mare
Fatto maggior di se.
Ma, dura a tanto orgoglio
Quel combattuto sasso;
E'l mar tranquillo e basso
Poi gli lambisce il pie."—METASTASIO.

A PALACE is so magnificent a title,—such a grandiloquent term,—that lest the reader should picture to himself lofty porticoes and colonnades, spacious halls supported by chiselled columns of Parian marble,—we will e'en give a short account of the edifice we were approaching, in the words of Signor Francisco,

who thus expatiated on the subject, as we descended the rocky declivity extending from the Torre Rosso to the margin of the sea, on which the said Palazzo is situated.

"Ah!" said he, with a deep-drawn sigh, as we scanned the desolate, dark, and bare surface of the naked and fire-scarred rocks before us,* "questa campagna! (and what a *campagna!*)—was very different in the times of the Marquis of Hastings. *He* had some idea of the caccia; here, where we see nothing at present but an occasional lizard, the ground was swarming with conigli (rabbits). The Island of Comino, which you behold yonder, like the dark back of some huge monster peering above the blue waters, was strictly preserved, and was absolutely alive with the skipping rascals. I knew the head-keeper, and many's the crack I've had at them when His Excellency was on his excursions to

* Nowhere are to be found more decided volcanic traces than on this rocky shore, which resembles in colour and appearance those masses of calcined cinders from a blacksmith's forge.

Sicily! He built the Palace, which you can see yonder, and also the house at some distance on its left, the former for himself and his sporting friends, the latter as a place of refuge and shelter for the poor people who might during bad weather be delayed in taking their passage across to Gozo. Ah! era un bravo Signore quello!"

"And what," asked I, "has become of all the rabbits? for devil a one do I see; and to what purpose is the Palace applied, now that the great people have no longer the good taste to patronise the sports of the field?"

"As to the rabbits—poverini! they have long since been poached, destroyed, annihilated; not the ghost of one of them remains, and the Palazzo is in charge of an old retired and pensioned serjeant of the Maltese Fencibles, who with his wife and family keep it in order, and can generally accommodate any Signore Inglese, who may, like yourself, be going to Gozo, with a dish of minestra or arrosto, and maybe also with a bed, should he feel very

weary. This old fellow, who from his hearty, open, and frank manners, is always known by the name of *Sans Façon*, has now been many years in this easy berth, and lives very comfortably at the Palace with his aged wife and two pretty daughters; but take care of your heart, for both Maria and Conchetta are *vezzozissime*, and such eyes!"

As Signor Francisco finished this family sketch, we drew up at the door: with cap in hand, and ready to receive us, stood old Sans Façon, who in very good English asked us to walk in.

After passing through the usual patio, we were ushered into the presence of the ladies, for whose appearance I had been prepared. "This, sir," said he, "is my old woman, and these my two girls: this is the eldest, Maria, who is shortly going to be married; and this, Conchetta, who is almost too young to think as yet of a husband."

To this address the young ladies looked up from their occupation of platting the leaves of

the date-tree;* but as neither their fine olive complexions appeared heightened by the mantling blood, nor did they look in any way the least abashed, I set them down as being either uncommonly deaf, or else possessed of an unusual quantum of impudence. In both these suppositions I, however, wronged them. It appeared to be old Sans Facon's ambition to make strangers believe that his fair spouse and daughters understood English as well as himself, though they turned out to be guilty of no other acquirement than their own native Maltese, into which he was always obliged—as we afterwards found—to translate his original instructions.

To "Come, old girl, get something to eat for the gentlemen"—"Quick, Maria, place chairs for the Signori"—he had to act as his own interpreter; but the "womankind" appeared quite accustomed to it; and as the

* The date-tree at Malta, as elsewhere, is converted to a variety of uses: here the leaves, after being split and platted, are made into capital hats, very much in vogue with the sailors of our men-of-war.

"old girl," accompanied by Sans Façon himself, bustled out, with Mr. Francisco in their wake, to inspect the commissariat, I was left alone with the young ladies, who continued to ply most assiduously their small, though certainly not lily-white digits amongst the intricate mazes of their platting.

Maria was a handsome brunette of about eighteen, a brunette in every sense of the word; raven locks, long black lashes, softening —though but slightly—the lightning glances which occasionally flashed through their downcast length; she possessed, moreover, the mellow olive complexion of the "soft South," bronzed by exposure to a burning sun, till it almost vied with the dusky hues of the Tropic,—but withal so clear and transparent that the tell-tale blood—the warm stream of life—might be distinctly seen meandering beneath its smooth surface, like—to use a poetical simile —crimson coral beds, dimly seen through the dark blue waters of the deep sea. If to this description be added the wanton *espièglerie* of sweet sixteen, the younger sister will then

also be faithfully portrayed. In every form and feature the Eastern origin might be traced, yea, even to the unslippered and unstockinged feet, which, as if unconscious of their naked beauties, peered shamelessly from beneath the short, coarse, though neat and snow-white petticoat.

After unsuccessfully addressing them in English and Italian, I began to think that my situation in this dumb-show with two pretty girls was becoming rather ludicrous, particularly as I soon noticed an arch wicked smile slily stealing over their expressive gipsy-looking countenances. However, a bright idea at this moment occurred. I bethought me to rub up the little Arabic I had once acquired, and try if it might not, *faute de mieux*, pass current in my present predicament. "Nahartuk saïd, ya sitte! keef halik?"—"Good day, Miss; how do you do?"—said I, with the greatest effrontery. An exclamation of surprise was the instantaneous reply; and conversation commenced in a sort of mixed jargon, which —however unconnected and broken— we

managed to render intelligible, and placed us on remarkably good terms with each other; till Sans Façon appeared with a dish redolent of the savory fumes of poached eggs and bacon, which, being flanked with a bottle of capital Sicilian *vin ordinaire*, soon engaged all the attention of Signor Francisco and myself.

After a hearty breakfast, we went to inspect the mansion under whose roof we were so hospitably treated, and were astonished to find on the first story, a handsome suite of tolerably-furnished apartments, which were moreover kept in the extremes of nicety and cleanliness. On old Sans Façon intimating that I might have the use of the bed-room, and that he could also accommodate my friend with a shakedown, I immediately determined on stopping for the night at Marfa, particularly as the wind was strong, and moreover, blowing from the westward, which might render our passage across to Gozo both long and tedious; the intervening channel being about three miles broad, and presenting anything save the smooth surface of a mill-pond.

On learning that our professed vocation was to wage war on the beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, the old Pensioner expressed his regret that it was too early in the season for the Tunny fishery, which he described as being well worth seeing, and which has been celebrated in history even from the times of the Phœnicians.* He, however, proposed to accompany us on a shooting excursion, and promised to indicate the usual abodes of the blue pigeon, which in great numbers frequent all the precipitous cliffs forming the boundary of this rocky coast. We accordingly sallied out, and, proceeding in a southerly direction towards the cliffs, went over ground such as in all my wanderings I had never before witnessed. For hundreds of yards together, not only verdure or vegetation of any sort were nowhere to be seen, but neither did the slightest particle of

* This industrious and enterprising people had established Tunny fisheries in various parts of the Mediterranean, even to the coasts of Spain; Malaga being one of the principal emporiums of the trade.

soil cover the black, charred, and volcanic mass of hardened cinder, which slowly and painfully we toiled over during our progress, and which ran down to the verge of, and abruptly terminated at the very water's edge. One might have imagined that in some former fearful convulsion of Nature—on the elements of fire and water waging a deadly warfare—Vulcan had been suddenly arrested by the trident of Neptune, which, Gorgon-like, must have turned him into stone, whilst advancing in torrents of liquid flame to invade the watery realms of Ocean! Woe to the unhappy mariner driven by the tempest on this inhospitable iron-bound coast! where unless—like the old navigator St. Paul—he be pilot enough to steer his skiff into some snug creek, inevitable destruction must await him.

Leaving this scene of desolation—this wide bed of lava and volcanic deposit—we gradually ascended, as the abrupt and rocky shore now assumed a still bolder appearance, and rose to stately cliffs, at whose foot broke the foaming surge with a dull and sullen sound, subdued

and deadened to our ears by the fearful height we had attained above the angry and boiling billows. This was the resort of our feathered foes, who, startled from their nests by the stones hurled over the perpendicular sides of the precipice by old Sans Façon, afforded us capital shots; but as all our victims found a watery grave, we were soon convinced, that to secure the killed and wounded, a boat would be necessary, in which to coast along under the cliffs; and it was now too late to think of such an accessory.

Tired by our want of success, and panting under the rays of a broiling sun, a flock of goats gave us the grateful prospect of a draught of milk: the shepherd-boy who tended them guided us to his hut, and here we gladly reposed for a time, after all our unsuccessful toils.

The Arab word "hālib" procured us the article required, which we quaffed out of a wooden bowl remarkable for anything save cleanliness; but misery was strongly marked in every part of the abode of these poor cotters, whose remote dwelling was now occupied

by the young shepherd and a care-worn woman, at whose breast hung a child in the last stage of squalid wretchedness and disease. The apparent state of lonely destitution in which this poor creature appeared to be, excited our sympathy, and awakened a curiosity which Sans Façon was enabled to satisfy. He informed us, that some time past, the family consisted of the father, who obtained his subsistence by fishing, along with the lad who now tended the goats; and a young man, the betrothed of his daughter, the rustic *belle* of the district; that by their united efforts they obtained an honest livelihood, and existed in easy competence; but in an evil hour, whilst one day engaged in their usual vocation off the Northern shores of Comino, a sudden squall coming on, drove their frail skiff against the cliff; they were swept by the breakers into one of the numerous caves by which that precipitous coast is perforated, and there miserably perished; however, the boy—being thrown on a projecting ledge of rock—had alone survived to relate the melancholy tale.

"Antonia was then the beauty of the island," added Sans Façon; "months have since passed away; with them have likewise vanished her charms, and, poverina! she has become deranged—matta," said he, out of compliment to Francisco, who did not understand English, and which made him interlard the latter language with occasional sentences of Maltese and Italian; "and with a garland of sea-weed entwined in her long tresses, she now sometimes sits for days together in the lonely cave —that sepulchre of all her hopes—to welcome the return from its fathomless depths, of her father and youthful lover."

The poor woman—who, from the mixed language in which the old pensioner made this communication, had understood the nature of its purport—now burst into an agony of tears, the sight whereof was nearly proving contagious; therefore, not wishing to make a display of the melting mood, after putting something into her hand to relieve her immediate necessities, I took my departure, with the resolution of paying next day a visit to

poor "Antonia's Grotto," and the "Fisherman's Grave."

Sorrowfully, and in silence, did we wend our way back to the palace, now gilded by the last rays of the setting sun. The short twilight of these genial climes soon faded into a darkness as sombre as the gloom which appeared to pervade the whole party, including even the "old girl" and her two pretty daughters. Sans Façon broke the spell by asking us if we did not feel hungry, and would not have our dinner taken up stairs, whilst they were at their usual evening meal? —it then being the hour for supper. "My good fellow," said I, "that sad story of the poor fisherman has made me feel so melancholy, that were I to go up to those great gloomy apartments, I should have a fit of the blue devils; therefore, if the ladies have no objection, I prefer remaining where I am, and taking a share of your *cena*."

Now, although old Sans Façon had probably, in his life, never heard of such animals as the "blues," still he understood what I

meant. We had lights brought in, a clean table-cloth spread, and soon sat down a sociable little party of six in number. The "minestra," or soup, was followed by a large platter of fish fried in oil, flanked by bacon and poached eggs, and the dessert of goat's-milk cheese, brown bread, and raw onions (start not, my sentimental friends!) was washed down with copious draughts of Sicilian wine, which, being already pretty freely circulated, had long since obliterated every trace of our former gloom. Conversation in all the pleasing variety of English, Italian, Maltese, and Arabic, was becoming animated, when suddenly and without announcement, a young man in the garb of a British soldier burst into the apartment, and, after shaking old Sans Façon's arm nearly out of the socket, implanted on the lips of the unresisting Maria a salute, the reverberations of which rang again throughout the lofty hall.

"Welcome, Battista!" said the veteran, after recovering a little from the rough *hand-*

ling he had just experienced—"welcome, my boy! but remember my gripe is no longer so powerful as thine; and if thou squeezest so hard thy wife that is to be, I know not what may be the consequence."

The rich glow which immediately suffused, not only the face, but the very neck and shoulders of Miss Maria, convinced me in a moment that this was *her* intended.

I was wicked enough to smile most significantly; and the poor girl's confusion was still further increased, when her lover, seating himself beside her, took her affectionately by the hand, and made the most tender inquiries after her health. It appeared that his military duties at Lavalette had for some time prevented him from seeing her, and he had now obtained a few hours' leave of absence, which he employed in walking seventeen or eighteen miles to get a glimpse of his beloved, and would have to retrace the same weary way next morning at daylight.

Oh, love! how powerful are thy impulses!

how resistless is thy dominion! and in following thy dictates, how lightly does youth think of dangers and difficulties—of space, time, or distance!

However, a much less inducement than the weighty one which swayed him would easily have made thirty or forty miles of rugged ground a mere jest to the handsome, active, young Light Bob; for Battista had already—with a soldier's pride—informed me, and his "wings" had testified, that he belonged to the "cacciadori" of the Maltese Fencible Regiment. Nor did the fatigues of the march, or the tender assiduities of love, appear to diminish one jot of his appetite, though they caused a visible diminution in the stores of the commissariat. Oil and fish—bread and bacon—cheese and garlic—successively disappeared with wonderful rapidity, to the amusement of all, and the racy jokes of Sans Façon, which often were of a nature to deepen the hue of poor Maria's complexion. "Well done, my son!" said the hearty old fellow; "another egg; fine things those for young

people about to be married. Some more wine to keep up your spirits in your present melancholy state; but, *corpo di San Bacco*—(by the body of St. Bacchus)—if all your children inherit their father's appetite—and I suspect you mean to have a few *piccolini*—I pity yon poor girl!"

At this sally—which was given partly in Italian, partly in Maltese, in order to be lost by no one of the party—I looked with *malicia* at the intended bride: 'twas too much for her to bear; she pretended to have missed something, stole out of the room, pursued by the subdued tittering of the "old girl" and of Conchetta, accompanied by a sort of view-halloo from Sans Façon, as Battista immediately followed to assist her in her research—after whatever she might have lost. "Good children those," said the old man; "only a pity the lad has got such an appetite!"

"But, old gentleman," said I, "let us have more wine, and give me a pipe. I want to hear some of your history, and where you learned to speak English so well."

Glad of the hint, he directly bustled out for a further supply of the generous juice and a provision of the soothing aroma, with other "appliances and means to boot."

The lover returned under his convoy, with the appearance of assisting him; glasses were replenished, the lamp trimmed, some grotesque-looking little "doudeens," carved out of the hard olive wood, being duly charged and placed between our lips, the ladies settled down to their knitting and plaiting, whilst Battista read riddles in the swimming eyes of his conscious mistress. Being thus duly arrayed, Sans Façon fully entered on the history of his life. 'Twas a long yarn, with which, good reader, we will not now try thy patience, but e'en close the chapter, and repeat what, about the hour of midnight, we said to the old Pensioner and his family:—"felice notte."—"good night to thee."

CHAPTER IV.

GOZO, OR OGYGIA.—AN EXCURSION TO THE GROTTO OF CALYPSO.

Island of Comino—Iron-bound coast—The Fisherman's Grave—Antonia's song—Gozo—Its appearance—Town of Rabbato—Lace-makers—The Franciscan Convent—Fra Juan—A venerable ecclesiastic—His museum—Fossil remains—St. Paul's tongues—A good dinner—The jolly Friar—Scene in the refectory—The Superior of the Convent—A reprimand—The Giant's Tower—Cyclopian architecture—The Grotto of Calypso—The abode of Ulysses—The Fungus Rock—Departure in the Alecto.

CHAPTER IV.

GOZO, OR OGYGIA.—AN EXCURSION TO THE GROTTO OF CALYPSO.

"Large was the grot in which the Nymph was found—
The fair-hair'd Nymph, with every beauty crown'd:
She sate and sung, the rocks resound her lays;
The cave was lighten'd with a rising blaze."

POPE'S *Odyssey, Book 5.*

THE next morning's dawn beheld us—thanks to the care of old Sans Façon—fairly embarked on one of those prettily-formed and many-coloured skiffs, which may be seen bounding like bright nautili over the ripple of La-valette's noble harbour. The elevated sterns, fancifully painted and adorned with an "eye"—the lightness of make, and the ease with which these fairy-looking boats are managed by their

swarthy crews, cannot fail to strike the attention of the stranger, no less than the foreign yet sailor-like appearance of those rough Tritons, who with measured cadence of their oars, dance you so merrily over the waves. Their bronzed countenances, surmounted with the long tasselled and pendent red-worsted cap, the loose trouser falling over the brown, naked foot, and supported by the red-woollen sash which so gracefully encircles their manly and vigorous forms—their bare breasts and brawny arms—give to these hardy children of the wave, a sailor-like, "devil-may-care," good-natured, though piratical looking expression, which would easily furnish either the poet or painter with subjects wherewith to people the deck of a "Corsair" or a "Red Rover."

Pursuant to our intention of the day before, we proceeded towards the northern part of the small Island of Comino, which lies midway in the channel between Malta and Gozo, and soon rounding a bluff point, found ourselves under the shadow of those high beetling cliffs, amidst which were described to be "Antonia's

Grotto" and the "Fisherman's Grave." Whilst we pulled beneath the frowning masses above our heads, the waters—though calm as a mountain lake—struck their base with that solemn, subdued, and deadened sound; the dormant whispers of the Monster Deep, whose fearful yell of anger one could easily imagine when lashed into fury by the tempest, and dashing the foaming spray to its utmost height on the resistless wings of the storm. As the now still, clear, and transparent waters disclosed to us all the secrets of the deep—its submarine forests of floating feathery plants, its coral beds, its dark rocks, and bright shining shells—whilst gently gliding above all these objects — like aeronauts skimming through ether over the flowery fields of earth—our minds, impressed with the sad tale which had conducted us hither, could not help peopling the scene with less pleasing objects than dimpled mermaids or Amphitrite's gay train; and looking over the gunwale of the boat on the bright though sunless landscape below—with Clarence—

"Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks,
A thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon ;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea.
Some lay in dead men's skulls ; and, in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept
(As 'twere in scorn of eyes) reflecting gems
That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by."

And fearful was the picture which the least imaginative mind must needs draw of the poor wretches hurried on the crested wave, and impelled towards this inhospitable shore; whilst worn out with fatigue and terror, their affrighted ears listened to sounds of approaching destruction in the lashing of boiling and angry billows against the spray-bespangled cliffs—sounds which ever and anon would indistinctly assail them amidst the loud howlings of the tempest and battling of the winds,—whilst the eye—straining through clouds of spray and mist—might perchance catch a glimpse of those frowning crags, at whose feet Hope herself must expire, and all their worldly cares be at an end.

As we silently brooded over these sad and melancholy thoughts, our little skiff, abruptly turning a huge bluff rock, seemed to shoot like an arrow into the very bowels of the earth—through the midst of those towering cliffs, which—as if by magic—appeared to open for our admittance.

The sudden transition from the broad glare of day, prevented us for some moments from discerning surrounding objects; but as the visual organs gradually recovered their use, we became aware that we were in one of those abodes fashioned by the hand of Nature, and which Art would in vain endeavour to imitate, or language to describe.

The rocky and fretted roof, which rose far above our heads, was lost in surrounding obscurity, from the midst of which—disturbed by our approach—flew out numbers of its feathered tenants, whilst the flooring of this fairy grot shone brightly—a wide sheet of silvery sand—through the deep and transparent element which supported us on its clear bosom. The eye could not extend to the further end

of the cave; but on becoming more accustomed to the surrounding gloom, we could faintly discern the dim outline of a white figure relieved against the murky background. "That must be poor Antonia," whispered Francisco, as we slowly glided towards the spot, for the rowers had shipped their oars, and the boat was smoothly and silently following the last impulse which had been given to its speed. The old Pensioner was right, for it was Antonia;—there was no mistaking the mystical, wan, and melancholy object which a nearer approach now disclosed to our view. She was seated on a ledge of rock running along the water's side; into the latter her feet were immersed, whilst her long black hair—fantastically decked with shells and sea-weed, of which it seemed in itself to be a species—dangled in matted locks on her shoulders, and dipped into the briny mirror, over whose surface she so intently hung as not at first to notice our approach. "Antonia!" whispered one of the boatmen, whose voice seemed sensible to gentle pity, which breathed softness into its usual

gruff tones—"Antonia!" and the poor girl looked up, and wiping off a falling tear with her long damp tresses, replied not, but, giving a vacant smile, commenced rocking her body to and fro, and chanting a low melancholy air to which she appeared to keep time by her movements.

Her words, according to Francisco's translation, might be rendered as follows:*—

"Father, and loved one, arise, arise!
Leave this cavern's gloom for the cloudless skies.
Why tarry so long in this dark, damp cave?
So still and so hush'd—'tis the type of the grave!

"King Death cannot harm love so woven as ours:
Oh, then let us hasten to vine-twined bowers,
And I'll fling these dank weeds to the whispering air,
And will deck me with wreaths of acacia fair!

"Not here, not here, shall my bridal be,
The tempest's bleak howl hath no music for me:
Here, where time is but motion, we ne'er can be blest,
Nor bring the frail bark to its haven of rest.

* For this translation of Francisco's version, the author is indebted to a talented friend, to whom he takes this opportunity of returning his best thanks.

" Then father, and loved one, arise, arise—
Leave this cavern's gloom for the peaceful skies—
For those hallowed regions of glorious light,
Where no seasons are known, not day, nor night."

Insanity was here too strongly marked to be for a moment mistaken, and I had not the heart to speak to the poor creature when she concluded her mournful ditty; but, putting a few small pieces of silver into her hand, made a signal to push off. As I turned to take a farewell glance, she had resumed her song, and was faintly smiling as she observed the receding circles formed on the surface of the smooth waters by the coins which I had just given her, and which she was dropping one by one into the sea. Poor Antonia! I have never since heard her fate, though perchance to this day she may be still hanging over the grave of her lover, all decked with the spoils of Ocean, to her the most appropriate of bridal garments.

* * * * *

Half an hour's pull brought us to the landing-place of Gozo, which appeared to be a

good deal frequented by numerous boats daily conveying fish, fruit, and vegetables to the markets of Lavalette. We found here a cranky old *calèche* and some ready-saddled donkeys waiting for customers; so, choosing the former conveyance, we were soon jolting along at the rate of four miles an hour towards the capital of the Island, the good town of Rabbato. Gozo, or "Ogygia," the "Atlantic Isle," as Homer terms it—but wherefore deponent saith not—presents rather more attractions than her sister Melita; for although we found ourselves still in the region of stone walls, these barriers to the picturesque were nevertheless further removed from each other: the intervening space was filled with something more resembling the offspring of Mother Earth than the burnt up aridity of Malta; and occasionally—though but rarely—the sight of a few patches of verdure, in the shape of some fig or orange trees—bespoke the not total absence of the pure element.

Francisco, for years accustomed to the sights of the "stone-masons' yard" of the huge quarry

we had just escaped from, was in raptures. "O! che pianure vezzoze! che bellezza! che alberi!" exclaimed the old hunter; and I was obliged to allow that the scenery was certainly more enlivening than that we had just quitted. A little more than an hour's jolting brought us—as has been said—to Rabbato; and whilst slowly ascending the long Causeway, lined on each side with cannon—which once may have hurled destruction on the Crescent, but were now, with military erectness, doing the duty of rail-posts—we could not help admiring the neatness of the place, and the imposing appearance of the Castle, which—placed on a steep acclivity amidst matted groves of cactus—proudly overlooked the surrounding country. Having pulled up at the door of the only hostelleria* the place afforded, secured beds, and bespoke a good dinner, we sallied out, and

* Although I do not recollect the name of mine host at Rabbato, yet his house, situated a little beyond the market-place, gave us so much satisfaction, that I cannot refrain from recommending it to the notice of any traveller who, in the course of his wanderings, may chance to visit Gozo.

went towards the Franciscan Convent, one of the friars of which was an old friend of my companion.

On proceeding through the quiet, narrow, and nearly deserted streets, we were both forcibly struck with the resemblance they presented to those of the cities on the coast of Syria, where Francisco had been a good deal in his youth. The same stillness, the same high stone solidity of wall, massive archways, and compact buildings which characterize those remnants of the Crusades—those mementos of the Western invaders—again presented themselves to our sight. The only tokens of human existence which shewed themselves, were a few women, who, solitarily and in silence, seated at their doorways, were busily engaged in making lace, of which great quantities are thus manufactured by hand. Speechless and immovable, these poor creatures sate at their apparently Penelopian tasks; the only sign of life being the motion of their fingers rapidly travelling over the

large rounded cushion resting on their knees, and bearing the fruits of their labours.

Day after day, and week after week, except on an occasional festival, this was the unvaried and monotonous course of their existence; yet so completely are we the children of habit and circumstances, that they probably found as much pleasure in this passive state of vegetation as others do in the excitement attending the bustle and turmoils of the world!

We were now approaching one of the best buildings in the place—the Franciscan Convent; for it is astonishing what care these gentlemen take of their worldly comforts; and I have invariably observed, that—in addition to a snug house over their heads—friars are always provided with a good cellar and an excellent *maitre-d'hotel.* It was the hour of siesta—that hour of universal repose with all good Catholics in the south—when we arrived before the Convent walls, and long had we to thunder at its massive gates ere an opening wicket gave us admission.

On inquiring for Fra Juan di ——, the yawning and scarcely awakened porter conducted us through long corridors and sounding galleries, to an entrance which he pointed out as leading to the friar's cell. I cannot help here noticing a remark I have always made on visiting these remains of the fanaticism and bigotry of the middle ages,—viz., the intolerable effluvia which invariably assail our olfactories in perambulating these holy edifices; nor was the present one free from these extremely disagreeable concomitants, and we were not sorry when partly removed out of their influence by being admitted into the cell of Fra Juan. He also had evidently been slumbering; and after rubbing his eyes, recognising Francisco, and tenderly embracing him, I was in due form introduced as an English traveller desirous of inspecting everything that was to be seen at Gozo, for which purpose the friar proffered his ready services. In the meantime,—begging us to be seated—he produced a couple of bottles and some liqueur glasses, wherewith

he pledged us in capital cherry-brandy, aguardiente, and rosolio.*

The severe privations and penance endured by this self-denying race, probably render a few such stimulants necessary to support their mortified spirits and emaciated frames; but be that the case or not, I have never found a friar's cell deficient in these and many other "creature comforts," though I will do them the justice to remark, that I have always seen them willing to share with a stranger the good things of which they were possessed. The hour being too late to make any distant excursion on that day, it was agreed we should visit the town, and such of Francisco's acquaintances as lived in its immediate vicinity; the friar promising to return and dine with us at our albergo.

* The aguardiente is a spirit strongly scented with aniseed; this and the rosolio, a sweet liqueur, are much in vogue in every part of the Mediterranean, particularly amongst the Roman-catholic religious orders, from the "Cork Convent," near Gibraltar, to the distant monkish abodes of Mount Lebanon and Palestine.

That afternoon's stroll gave me a slight idea of the state of society at Rabbato, which seemed confined to the "avocato," or attorney, the doctor, the parish priest, and apothecary of the place; the few houses of more consequence, belonging to people of Lavalette, who come here for a short time during the summer months.

There are few places more completely cut off from any foreign intercourse than Rabbato — more completely inclosed within its own narrow circle. Amongst others to whom Francisco's acquaintance extended, was a venerable old priest, respectable at once from his great age and scientific pursuits,—the latter rather an unusual occurrence to be met within the generality of his cloth.

This old gentleman, who was nearly ninety, had formed an extensive collection of the different natural curiosities and antiquities of the island, which he felt great complacency in exhibiting to any strangers who might wish to see what in itself, was a really valuable museum; and containing many relics indubitably

proving the remote periods and the various races, by which Gozo had been at different times occupied. Amongst other specimens, I remember noticing several agate coins, a species of currency peculiar to the furthest antiquity. Then followed specimens of Phœnician, Greek, Roman, and Moorish remains—undeniable data of historical facts. A few remarkable fossil remnants were also shewn to us, called the "Lissen é San Paulo,"* or St. Paul's tongues, peculiar, I believe, to "Calypso's Isles," and consisting of what appeared to be the teeth of some monstrous animal of a species long since extinct, and at present unknown.

After fully satisfying our curiosity, and partaking of some refreshment, the old gentleman requested me to insert my name amongst those of a long list of travellers, who had at different times visited his sanctum; and it is

* From the Arabic "Lissan," or tongue. These beautiful fossils are found here and at Malta in such numbers, that if St. Paul ever owned one half of them, he must indeed have been a "powerful linguist."

to me a matter of regret that *his* appellation has completely escaped my memory. He was —besides a collector of antiquities—an enthusiastic geologist, and endeavoured to prove, by the peculiar formation of the rocks, the disposition of the strata, and the numerous caverns with which the island was perforated, that its origin must be decidedly volcanic; and taking us to the window of his study, he pointed out a hill, whose conical-shaped summit bore ample testimony to his arguments, and had all the appearance of being the extinct crater of some ancient volcano.

A survey of all the "lions" of the place took up our time until the hour of dinner, to which we sate down, after our fatigues, with the greatest gusto. Although prepared at such an out-of-the-way place for a homely meal, and one probably not got up under the superintendence of a "cordon bleu," still our repast presented attractions not to be sneered at by the greatest epicure.

The "minestra" was good; the "arrosto" done to a turn; the fish unexceptionable, and

of some of those delicate species only found in the clear waters of the Mediterranean. We had, moreover, some capital Sicilian wine, "bianco e nero;" and the feast concluded with what I never expected to have met in this part of the world—a fine dish of strawberries for our dessert.

I can myself, on most occasions, play a capital knife-and-fork, but in this respect my companions astonished and soon completely distanced me; more particularly the friar, who performed prodigies of valour in the art masticatorial. In this he was seconded and encouraged by Francisco—on the principle, as he said, that the dinner being paid for, we might as well make the most of it; and observing this precept the more readily, as *he* had not himself to "pay the piper."

Cigars followed the conclusion of the feast; then grog and mulled wine; till at last our "Friar Tuck,"—whose potations were either deeper than those of his companions, or whose head was not so much inured to such powerful libations,—doffing his cowl, threw off all restraint,

and, in the unreserved worship of the rosy god, became the most boisterous of the party. Song succeeded song, as bumper after bumper followed in quick succession; till at last,—fearing we should not, under his increasing excitement, be able to conduct him back to his cell,—each taking hold of an arm, we forcibly removed this holy man from the Bacchanalian altar, and, amidst snatches of glees and drinking-songs, managed to convey him back to the convent gates. We were about now to take leave. However, he insisted on our accompanying him to his cell, where the rosolio and cherry-brandy were again produced, and we became so noisy in our mirth, that a message was brought from the Superior, requesting the instant attendance of our jolly friend, in the refectory below.

This alarmed him so much as nearly to produce sobriety: however, on our offering to accompany him, he mustered courage enough to undergo the approaching ordeal. We accordingly descended, and, after traversing a long stone gallery, were ushered into the re-

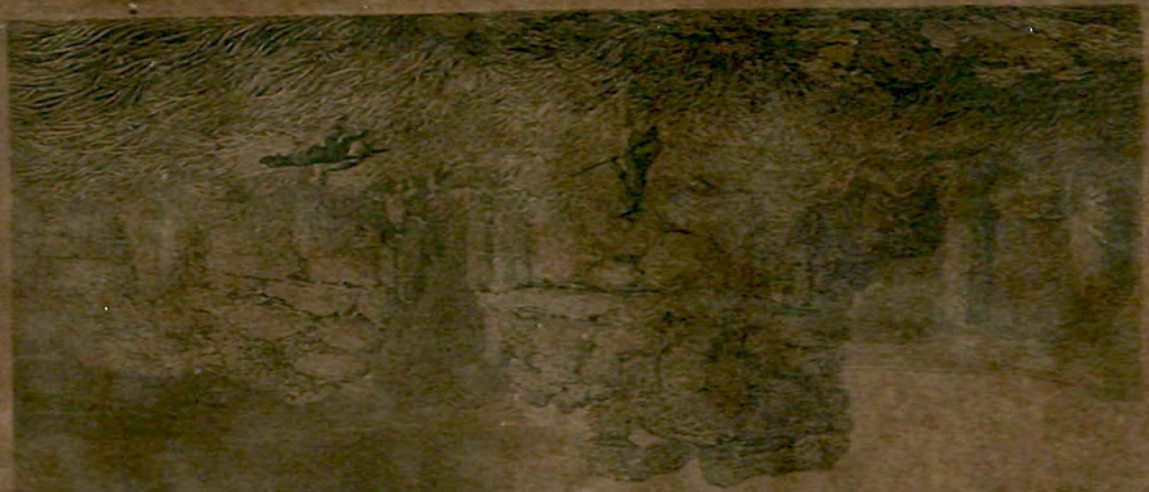
fectory, where sat at a table, spread with refreshments, a dozen of the Brothers, together with their Superior, placed on a more elevated stool than the rest. A cloud hung over his stern features, which appeared nearly to annihilate poor Fra Juan. However—as had been previously agreed on—Francisco stood spokesman, and—not allowing the flood-gates of the Priest's wrath sufficient time to open—in a most respectful tone he begged his "Reverenza" a thousand pardons for being the cause, together with the "Signor Inglese,"—pointing to me—of Fra Juan's late return to the Convent, for which he hoped he would be pardoned on the score of meeting an old friend.

It must be confessed we did not present the most respectable figures to appear before so august a tribunal—a drunken friar—between two ruffianly poacher-like looking characters in well-soiled shooting jackets, sun-burnt, flushed with wine, and covered with dust; thus paraded before the cowled Brethren, seated in their high-backed chairs along the antique-looking narrow table, with curiosity

thoroughly depicted in their fat and oily faces; whilst the high brass lamp threw its yellow and sickly rays on the withered features and contracted brow of the old Superior—all this would have formed a picture worthy of Hogarth, or any other artist "cunning in his craft."

I lost no time in seconding Francisco's appeal, and perceiving I really *was* a stranger, as described by that worthy; stern justice gave way to politeness, and coldly remarking that he regretted such an irregularity should have occurred, he promised for this once to overlook the offence; but trusted our friend would never again expose himself to a similar reprimand.

Having obtained this assurance, we made our bow, Fra Juan slunk back to his cell, and we returned—laughing heartily at the poor devil's expense—to our albergo, where shortly afterwards, Francisco's loud snoring re-echoing through our double-bedded apartment, soon convinced me that he was well on his travels through the land of dreams.



Orion's loves with the rosy-fingered Aurora are allowed to be purely metaphorical, implying that early dawn is the period most appropriate to the sportsman; and to this principle we adhered, when—notwithstanding the revels of the night before—sunrise of the following morning saw us duly equipped for the chase, determined to exterminate the last quail which was to be met with on the Island; combining, therefore, business with pleasure, exploring with shooting—we bent our steps towards the "Torre del Gigante," or Giant's Tower, on our way to the far-famed and classic grotto of Homer's Calypso. After beating with very little success over the few remaining fields of barley still standing, and bagging a couple of quail, we made direct for the "Torre," and found it well worth our inspection.

It is a roofless semicircular mass, of which the diameter may be about fifty yards in length, and composed of enormous blocks of stone, of such dimensions as to justify its appellation of the "Giant's Tower," and it is

difficult to form an idea of the manner in which such ponderous masses could have been raised and transported from a distance, in those ruder ages when this strange edifice must have been constructed—by whom, and for what purpose remains still a matter of conjecture and surmise, as no record exists affording the least clue to its origin. It is of that order of architecture termed the "Cyclopian"*—of which a few remains are still to be met with in Greece and in some parts of the East—and is divided into two chambers, one of which appears to have been used for sacrificial purposes. Facing the south-east—the building stands on the side of a hill, about twenty yards down the declivity of which, is seen a sort of Druidical altar, composed of a large block of stone twelve feet in length, and supported in a horizontal direction, on two upright pillars of a width more than half that dimension.

* This sort of building is always very massive, and the stones of which it is composed, instead of being squared, are made to fit into each other.

Close to these strange and mysterious remnants of past-gone times, Francisco's setter put up a brace of quail, one of which was very soon knocked over by the old cacciadore, who proved himself far from being a despicable shot: however, time pressed; so after eating a frugal repast of bread and cheese on a large carved block—where many a garlanded victim may erst have bled, and many a libation flowed at Superstition's shrine—we got under weigh, and made sail for the Grotto of Calypso, a spot of no less interest than the one we had just quitted, as being the theme of the father of poetry—of old Homer—who describes his favourite hero, Ulysses, as having reposed there for seven long years, in the arms of the blooming "fair-haired" goddess.

Gozo is generally allowed to be "Ogygia," the favoured island of Calypso mentioned in the Odyssey. Without, however, noticing the doubt thrown upon its identity from one passage in Homer, which describes it as the "Atlantic Isle," I shall refer at once to my notebook, and leave it to the reader to pronounce

whether or not Homer accurately describes the scene that now lay before us.

"After a toilsome ascent, we at last gained the summit of some high land overlooking the sea, which lay a considerable distance below: the intervening space, although so steep as to be in some parts almost precipitous, presented rather an unusual sight in this region of barrenness and sterility—all was verdure; and, although at a burning season—a verdure of so bright a hue, as to lead to the belief that numerous springs must irrigate this favoured spot. The fig-trees overtopping the thorny cactus were luxurious and flourishing, whilst myrtles revelled under the wild grape, whose tendrils waved in the soft breeze, as they gracefully depended from the overhanging rocks at our feet. This sylvan landscape extended to the margin of the deep, where another peculiar feature presented itself, not, I believe, elsewhere seen on this rocky and iron-bound coast. This was a fine, sandy beech, which, extending far on our right, disappeared behind a dark, bluff, and projecting promontory. We

were lost in admiration of a view in every way so unexpected; still we could not see the Grotto we had come so far to explore, and for which purpose our guides were ready prepared with torches.

"On expressing our wishes on the subject, we with difficulty followed them, as they scrambled down amidst the confused and enormous masses of rock at our feet, and which formed a sort of guardian cliffy rampart to the fairy scene below. At the expense of scratched hands and torn garments, we at last reached a small platform or landing-place amongst the surrounding huge fragments of rock, and at the entrance of a low and narrow aperture in the cliff. Our guides here lit the torches, and we crept through the opening, which resembled more the entrance to the den of a wild beast, than that of the enchanted bower, where for seven long years the 'fair-haired nymph' retained at her feet that wisest of men—the godlike Ulysses. Advancing along this passage for a few yards, in a recumbent posture, we suddenly emerged into an

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elevated though narrow space, the rocky wall of which in some parts assumed a stalactital appearance, something like that of St. Michael's Cave at Gibraltar; but in no way could the dark subterranean abode we were now visiting be compared to that magnificent palace of Nature. Had the goddess been present to administer to us—as she did once to feathered Mercury—the rites of hospitality—to refresh us with 'ambrosial cates and nectar rosie red,' —we might have been tempted to prolong our stay; but none of these attractions presenting themselves, we were glad to get once more into the light of day, and amused ourselves in exploring the steep and verdant space, extending for upwards of a quarter of a mile, between the grotto and the rippling waves which gently broke on the golden sands below."

Highly pleased with Gozo, and with the capital treatment and civility we experienced in the little "albergo" at Rabbato, we lingered for several days on the island, during which—whilst strolling about with our dogs and guns, —we visited nearly every hole and corner of

its not very extensive surface; climbed every hill, explored every valley, and extended our perambulations to its remotest western extremity, where we saw the celebrated Fungus Rock, that isolated mass, completely separated from the neighbouring shore, and which is only reached by means of a long rope suspended between the intervening cliffs. A box is attached to this by rings, and in it the adventurous traveller, after being duly suspended, is swung across the chasm, and, if a botanist, will perhaps be repaid for his trouble by inspecting that curious plant which only grows on this rock,—from whence the latter derives its name, and which has long been celebrated for its medicinal virtues.*

But time wore on apace; the long-expected day for the departure of the steamer at last approached; and—like old Ulysses—bidding a

* The plant growing on this isolated and barren spot, is a species of fungus, the juices of which, when extracted by being boiled in water, are said to be a certain cure for the most inveterate cases of dysentery and diarrhœa.

joyful adieu to "Calypso's Isles,"—though in rather a better appointed craft;—its white casals, barren aridity, and endless walls, were soon lost in the wide circle of the watery horizon, as in a direct and unvarying line, like the boiling lava from those neighbouring thrones of Vulcan—Etna, Vesuvius, and Stromboli,—our fire-born conveyance, the good steamer "Alecto," hissed, smoked, and bubbled onwards in its rapid course.

CHAPTER V.

CASTING THE DJEREED ON MOUNT LEBANON.

The dawn on Mount Lebanon—A motley group at the Fountain Head—Their costume and appearance—View from the first range of Lebanon—Wretched state of the country under Mehemet Ali—Prospect of amelioration in circumstances—Billets in winter quarters—Assade El Khyat—Giorgio Jummal—Lessons in Arabic—Albanian Camp—Coffee and pipes—Lingua Franca—Barren and stony tract—The valley of Hemānah—Cultivation in the upper Lebanon—Maronite peasantry—The Tontura—Druse women—The residence of the Grand Prince—His attendants and courtiers—A gracious reception—An Eastern repast—The review—A sham fight—Splendid horsemanship—The Ladies of the Land—Casting the Djereed—The signal to disperse.

CHAPTER V.

CASTING THE DJEREED ON MOUNT LEBANON.

"Thrice clapp'd his hands, and call'd his steed;
Resign'd his gem-adorn'd chibouque,
And mounting featly from the mead,
His way amid his *Emirs* took,
To witness many an active deed,
With sabre keen or blunt djereed."

BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

It was early in the month of November, in the year of our Lord 1840, at the moment when the "russet-mantled morn" still faintly contended with darkness, and was fast disclosing the distant beauties of the already snow-capped Sanneen and Knessi—those towering summits of Lebanon—that beside a clear

fountain—on the first aclivity of that gigantic range—a party of well-mounted horsemen were breathing their panting steeds, apparently awaiting with impatience till the increasing light should enable them to pursue their journey over the rough and rock-strewn path, which now began, with a precipitous ascent, to breast the steep sides of the mountain.

In these sunny regions bright Phœbus lingers not in the embrace of Aurora, but impetuously drives forth his blazing chariot through the portals of the morn, and suddenly overwhelms the firmament with a flood of golden splendour—in plain terms, there is here little or no twilight; and the transition from total darkness to the nearly broad glare of day is most unexpected and instantaneous.

It was one of these sudden metamorphoses which disclosed to the view of the spectator (supposing always one to have been found in so lonely a place) the above-mentioned group, consisting of three well-appointed cavaliers, with what appeared to be their attendants, or followers, on foot.

The rising sun, which now threw a soft saffron hue, delicately tinged with streaks of vermilion and crimson, on the snowy and distant summits of those towering heights, whose great elevation narrowly confined the horizon of the eastern prospect, soon likewise — to use a painter's phrase—"brought out" in powerful relief the motley group at the "Ain," or fountain head above alluded to. The pedestrian attendants—from their Oriental garb and dark-bronzed features—were evidently natives of the soil: whilst a slight fair-haired youth, with laughing light-blue eyes, habited in a rough pea-jacket, over which carelessly and not ungracefully hung a Scottish plaid, his feet shoved well home in the shortened stirrups, and with a devil-may-care John Bull sort of look, left little doubt of *his* identity, or of the distant Northern land which had given him birth.

The remaining individuals of the party might perhaps have afforded more food for speculation to an inquisitive naturalist; for whilst the short, braided, sky-blue, and richly-

embroidered vest, the capacious trouser-bags of the same cerulean hue, the complicated folds of the thick silken scarf, in which were inserted no end of deadly weapons—from the long silver-mounted horse-pistol to the glittering sheath of the "kandjar," or dagger—the crooked scymitar carelessly depending from his side, and the bright red-morocco boots resting in broad shovel-shaped iron-stirrups,—bore too strong an impress of Eastern costume to be for a moment mistaken: yet the large white turban, jauntily placed on one side of the head, protected a fairer face, a bluer eye, and lighter coloured locks than could be laid claim to by the gentleman above noticed, in the rough pea-jacket. Then again; the tall raw-boned figure earnestly contemplating the lovely scene now fast disclosing itself beneath them—as resting on his holsters he leant over a small though powerful and well-bred Arab charger, which stood passively under his reclining weight—although arrayed in the bright crimson garb and gay waving plume of a British Staff Officer—had nevertheless something so foreign in his

hard sun-burnt features, shaded by a dark moustache and greyish locks—

> "Coal black, but grizzled here and there,
> Though more through toil than age"—

that one would almost have been tempted to imagine, a change of garments had,—by some strange freak of fancy, been effected between the parties—that the Syrian was decked in the English uniform, whilst the Son of Albion had donned the flowing robes of his Eastern companion.

But abhorring as we do all unnecessary appearance of mystery, we therefore at once tell the reader that the above interesting group was composed of no less a personage than his humble servant the "Author," who with an English friend* and his trusty Dragoman, Georgio Jummal—was then proceeding on a visit to the Grand Prince of the Mountains—the Emir Beschir El Cassim; to

* Mr. W. P. Hunter, the author of the "Narrative of the late Expedition to Syria."

whom he had had a letter of introduction from the "Commodore El Kibir"—as old Charley Napier was commonly called by these Sons of the Hills, after the severe lessons he had of late given to the Egyptians.

But the varied scene below us being now fully illumined by the yet warm and powerful rays of a Syrian November sun, we will briefly attempt to describe the splendid landscape it disclosed, which—like a highly-finished model or plan—lay now, "freed from war's alarms," in peaceful and smiling tranquillity at our feet.*

The far horizon, bounded by the continuous blue line of the great "White Sea,"† ran unbroken, save by an occasional silvery and glittering sail, until terminated on the right

* Subsequent events have sadly proved that this flattering hope has been prematurely expressed—Mount Lebanon, under the present tyrannical sway of the Turks, being in a much worse condition than ever it was under Ibrahim Pasha and the Egyptians. So much for the promises, then made by England to its brave inhabitants!

† The Mediterranean is so called by the Orientals.

of the picture by yon distant purple mountains—a continuation of the Lebanon range—which, extending beyond Gebail and Tripoli, appeared gradually to melt their darker tints into those of the pure waters which seemed to woo their wild and wave-worn base.

Following this line, the eye next rests on the gently swelling heights of Djouni, now inscribed in history's page, by British enterprise and achievement.* Yon bluff and rocky point, surmounted by the bare, white, and massive walls of a Maronite convent, marks the embouchure of the "Nahar-el-Khelb," or Dog river; running up with successive broken and precipitous undulations to the heights and village of Boharsuf, and the pine-covered summits of Cornetshouan;† names which will be long remembered in the hitherto victorious annals of Ibrahim Pasha.

* Djouni was the first place in which a landing was effected on the coast of Syria during the last campaign, and whence arms were distributed to the mountaineers.

† From both of which Commodore Napier drove back the defeated Egyptians.

The more immediate hills shot up so boldly on our right—with their mulberry-planted terraces—as nearly to conceal the smooth and shining waters of St. George's Bay, whose sandy margin bites deeply into the rugged Lebanon, and appears to pursue the receding mountains to that spot where the "Nahar-é-Beyrout" impetuously bounds into its embrace, tainting the clearness and ruffling the calmness of its bosom, which heaves—as if in anger—at being thus polluted by the turbid stream.

Although at the distance of several leagues, the clearness of an unclouded atmosphere, assisted by a good telescope, enabled us distinctly to view England's proud banner floating in the morning breeze, and displayed from some of her noblest bulwarks; as the Princess Charlotte, the Benbow, and Bellerophon appeared to slumber lazily at anchor in a surrounding mass of liquid silver.

Next—faintly tinged with the golden beams of the rising sun—might be clearly seen the Moorish castles, the summits of the minarets, the top of Fakir-el-Din's Tower, and

of the massive buildings composing the town of Beyrout; the whole peering above a waving ocean of verdure, apparently placed as a line of demarcation between the mountain and the plain—between the productions of the snowy north and those of the burning tropics; for while on the right a noble forest of stately pines* stretched to the foot of the hills, it was united by the intervening gardens and young plantations—which partly concealed the city—to the arid Lybian-looking tract of barren red sands, unshaded save by a few waving date-trees, and extending to the Ras-é-Beyrout, where the broad ocean again framed in the landscape on the left; whilst, at our feet, the plain—thickly dotted with the small, square-built, stone houses of the peasantry—was overshadowed by the bright hues of the mulberry, the dark-green of the fig-tree, or more

* Said to have been planted by the celebrated Fakir-el-Din, Prince of the Druses, (whose sway extended over Beyrout during the seventeenth century,) for the purpose, as is supposed, of stopping the encroachment of the sands which are constantly accumulating to the westward of the city.

sombre foliage of the blueish lead-coloured olive,—dense masses of cactus and waving groups of tall date-trees adding their Oriental charms to the lovely panorama, which we continued long to contemplate with varied and conflicting emotions.

On witnessing this beautiful prospect, the reflection oft occurred, of how sadly the good intents of a kind Providence had been here perverted by the crimes and passions of man! how oft the iron, grasping hand of tyranny and oppression, (the oppression of the cruel and fanatic rites of Islam over the religion of Christ!) how oft the bloody scourge of war had deluged this fair Eden with ensanguined floods, and had elicited groans of misery and despair from its peaceful though suffering inhabitants!

But now Hope lent her cheering smiles to the future—the tyrannical sway of Mehemet Ali was at an end; and it was to be expected that the Christian powers, who had—like the avenging angel—driven him out of this earthly Paradise, would (for such had been the promises held forth) effectually protect its inha-

bitants against the bigotry and oppression of the Osmanli.

Everything at present concurred to foster such pleasing anticipations, and to deck the future in the brightest colours. With the sultry heats of summer, sickness was fast disappearing; "Fever" no longer stalked with giant strides through this devoted land; "Pestilence" had not as yet, this season, sighed o'er it her deadly breath; "Famine" was fast flying at the approach of the twin sisters Peace and Plenty; a brilliant sun, an unclouded sky, and delightful atmosphere, now heightened the beauties, and lent tenfold charms to the scene I was so intently engaged in contemplating, whilst leaning over my favourite little Arab steed, "Sidon," near the fountain around which our motley party were then grouped.

But we may perhaps, whilst the reader is passing over in his mind's eye the picture we have attempted to portray,—we may as well "hark back," and give him the reasons—I'm fond of reasons—of the interesting party afore-

said being at so unchristianlike an hour—for remember, 'tis scarcely past sunrise—assembled at the above locality.

Well then, be it known to all, whom it in any way concerneth, that some time previously to this—when the Old Commodore gave up his mountain command, ceased to be a "horse-marine," and resumed his own lawful occupation, by sailing in command of a squadron to blockade Alexandria—I found myself turned adrift at Beyrout, and left to shift for myself as to mess and billets—in less technical terms, to forage as I best might for board and lodging—two very great requisites to the comfort of all campaigners, even when in winter-quarters.

Under these circumstances, it was my good fortune to become acquainted with a young Syrian, who had been educated in England, of the name of Assade el Kyaat, for whose hospitable attentions I shall ever feel grateful. Taking pity on my forlorn situation, and with a true spirit of liberality overcoming the deeply-rooted prejudices of his country, he

offered me an asylum in the house and family of his brother-in-law, Giorgio Jummal; and extending the same hospitality to a young English traveller (Mr. W. P. Hunter) placed in nearly similar circumstances with myself, we became—and are I believe, solitary instances of having been so—the inmates of an Oriental circle, the favoured admitted to an Eastern harem, consisting of a fine-looking matron of three or four-and-thirty, two beautiful daughters, and some younger children; and proud am I to say, that in neither case was the confidence reposed in us by our friend Assade, in any way abused or misplaced.

Mine host Giorgio—who spoke Italian most fluently—became an inseparable companion; whilst in the Arabic language I made rapid progress under his tuition and that of his pretty sisters, my fair friends—the lively black-eyed Sarah and the more sedate and pensive, though no less amiable Nasarah, whose bashful timidity at the unusual sight of European strangers soon gave way to the most engaging affability and frankness. My

studies in this most difficult idiom were prosecuted with so much success and perseverance, that I became more than ever convinced of the truth of what saith the poet, that

> "'Tis sweet to be taught in a strange tongue
> By female lips and eyes," &c.

Time, during these occupations in "winter-quarters," glided smoothly on; but Giorgio and his guests sometimes varied their pursuits by an occasional trip to the mountains; and it was on one of these expeditions, that—furnished with a letter of introduction from the Commodore to his Highness the Emir Beschir—having mounted our horses two or three hours before daybreak, we had proceeded to that point on our travels where we have taken the liberty of introducing ourselves to the notice of the reader, with whom—hoping now to make a fair start, and giving a truce to moralizing, sentiment, and scenery—we will e'en turn our backs on the prospect, and leaving the "Wād-é-Sharoor"* on our right,

* "Wād," the Arabic for "valley."

bravely attack the next eminence, on which stand some twenty or thirty white tents, which however, there is little danger of our finding occupied by the Egyptians. Painfully toiling through the steep ascent of a deep gorge, we reached one of the outposts, when the unusual sight of the ample foustanelli and embroidered perikhinos,* proclaimed our new acquaintances to be Albanians or Arnauts, many hundreds of whom had lately deserted from Ibrahim Pasha, and declared for the Sultan. The knowledge of a few words of modern Greek enabled us to inquire for their chief, whom they pointed out as he rapidly approached to meet us on a splendid Arab, whose fiery motions he held under the most complete control; whilst his own martial figure, covered with rich gold embroidery and glittering arms, threw back with dazzling splendour the bright rays of the morning sun.

* The Greek "fustanelli" answers to the Highland kilt; the "perikhinos" are embroidered leggings, often very richly ornamented.

After mutual salutations, he invited us to his head-quarters — a peasant's hut — which Ibrahim Bey (for such we learnt was his name) had converted into a temporary abode, and constituted his "quartier général." The usual tokens of Oriental hospitality — the eternal chibouk and never-ceasing coffee — were instantly produced; and extending ourselves on the carpet of repose, we inhaled the one and imbibed the other, whilst the conversation was carried on in a strange lingua Franca, composed of Greek, Arabic, and Italian, which we appeared, however, by some means mutually to understand. The Pallikar* could give us no intelligence of Ibrahim Pasha, further than when last heard of, he was encamped at his old station at Zachlé, in the plain of the Boccah; but the Emir Beschir was, he informed us, with a considerable force, at Hemānah, a village situated about four hours further† in the moun-

* A Greek warrior.

† Distance in the East is always reckoned by time, an hour being considered equivalent to three miles, or the time employed by a caravan to traverse that space.

tains, to which place—after, with difficulty, escaping from the hospitable importunities of this descendant of Pyrrhus—we accordingly bent our course.

The path, which hitherto had borne little resemblance to an English turnpike road, now became so steep, rugged, and rocky, as greatly to retard our progress; and on leaving behind us the well-watered valley of Sharoor, we entered on a rocky tract of country, and traversed "dry stony places," whose barren and desolate aridity I had scarcely ever seen equalled. In one part of our course we had to cross a wide belt, not of common rock, but what fancy might have pictured as a rough, bubbling, and stormy sea, suddenly petrified, congealed, and next calcined by the action of fire when at the very climax of its greatest wrath—its most unruly turbulence. Not a blade of grass, a shadow of vegetation, a living being, or animated object enlivened this dreary space, save where here and there might be seen a solitary lizard* basking on

* These lizards were of the same species known in India as the "bloodsucker," which, although perfectly

the sunny side of one of these broken and flinty waves, into whose interstices it would rapidly take refuge at the sound of our approaching footsteps; and it was to us matter of surprise how our high-mettled steeds,—shod as they were with flat slippery plates of iron,—could ever retain their footing over, at one instant, huge broken fragments of rock, whilst at another they were rapidly sliding along the smooth and polished surface of large flat slabs of the same material; but so much did they appear accustomed to this mountain wayfare, as to traverse these rugged paths in apparent ease and confidence, and without so much as a single false step or accident of any kind.

After proceeding thus in an easterly direction for four or five miles beyond the Albanian camp, we came to the wide and deep valley—somewhat resembling a huge punch-bowl—at the extremity of which, and midway up whose precipitous sides, stands the village of Hemānah, its white flat-roofed buildings being

harmless, inoffensive little creatures, are so called from their fierce, threatening appearance, and crimson-coloured throats.

distinctly visible on the face of the steep acclivity against which they rested, long and long before the windings of the "Wād" enabled us to approach its romantic-looking precincts.

As we cautiously wended our way along the narrow footpath which skirted the southern cliffs overhanging the yawning gulf at our feet, we could not help being struck with the sublimity of the view, combining at once all the charms of the picturesque with the stern grandeur, and lofty mountain character of Alpine scenery. The toppling, grey, and barren cliffs above our head, along whose naked brow proudly soared with unmoving and expanded wing, the king of the feathered tribe,—the majestic Eagle,—were strongly contrasted with the dark green of the pine forests, where,—many hundred paces below,—could be heard the hollow and subdued bellow of a mountain torrent, of whose white foam we sometimes caught a passing glimpse through the sombre verdure which concealed its boiling course, and whose roar was re-echoed by the surrounding rocks; for save an

occasional bird of prey sailing past in mid-air, or the distant and transient glimpse of a goat* bounding over deep chasms from rock to rock, no living creature appeared, to disturb the quiet solemnity of the scene before us.

However, as we advanced towards the extremity of the valley, signs of the presence of man began to be manifest: the steep slopes were cut into terraces, on which—watered by numerous tributary rills—flourished the mulberry, the fig, and the spreading walnut-tree, often united together—as if in bonds of amity—by the curling tendrils of the vine. A little further on, we were cheered with the sight of human habitations; and as the small, square, and massive stone-built cottages† burst on our view at an angle of the winding path, we beheld for the first time that day, some specimens of the hardy

* The goats of this part of Lebanon are remarkably handsome animals, with long pendent ears, like those of a spaniel.

† These dwellings much resemble in structure and materials those of the Maltese peasantry.

peasantry of Lebanon,—whose industry is so strongly marked by the high state of cultivation under which are kept the steep, and in some places almost inaccessible sides of these rugged hills,—where terrace rises over terrace, and serves to retain the fertile though scanty soil, which would otherwise be speedily washed away by the winter rains,—but is enabled by this means to give birth to the most luxuriant vegetation, in spots which at first sight, might be supposed to afford a footing to nought save the mountain goat, or suited only for the eyrie of the eagle or the vulture.

As we passed these hardy sons of the soil, friendly salutations were invariably exchanged, of which the most usual were, "Soubah bil khire yā Sidi!" (good morning, my Lord!), "kief hālik?" (how do you do?) &c. Whilst these greetings came from amidst the vines or mulberry-trees, where their originators were busily engaged at work,—softer tones—the subdued tittering laugh, and the silvery notes of woman's voice—announced the vicinity of that fairest portion of the creation; and, crowding

eagerly on the low flat roofs of their humble dwellings, the daughters of Lebanon pressed forward to witness the passing strangers.

In the East, woman's lovely countenance is rarely or never seen; but the Christian tenets of this part of "the Mountain" (as Lebanon is called *par excellence*) allow its bright radiance to shine unreservedly on man; and amongst its rocky fastnesses—even in the lower classes—are to be met with faces and features that would elicit admiration from, and fix the attention of those least sensible to the attractions of female charms.

A profusion of raven locks, with the clear and ruddy complexion of more northern regions, added often to an eye of the deepest and darkest blue, are the usual characteristics of these mountain nymphs. As to their dress, although many do not admire that singular part of the costume called the "tontura," or high silver horn, placed on the top of the head, and which, though it might look *outré* amidst the crowds of our cities or saloons—yet here, amidst the roar of foaming torrents, under

the dark shade of toppling crags, or gracefully leaning, as in the present instance, on high over their terraced roofs—these female figures, with the long white veil (which overhangs and partly conceals the "horn") wildly streaming in the breeze, had at once a wild and mystic effect, highly in accordance with the surrounding savage scenery, of which at first glance they might be mistaken for the tutelar spirits.

Whatever we might have thought of *them*, these daughters of the hills were much amused with the novelty of *our* appearance; cordially returned the salutations and inquiries after their health, and seemed quick in their repartees to the several jokes which Master Giorgio appeared to indulge in at their expense, and which, from the boisterous merriment they elicited, were no doubt well applied and much to the point.

Leaving this small hamlet—where we had met with such civility from the men, and been treated with so little distant reserve by their merry, good-natured mates—we were not a little surprised, on meeting shortly afterwards with a party of women, to find them on

our approach wildly hurry out of the path, and whilst scrambling up the steep acclivity on our right, either completely turn their backs on us, or else so closely muffle themselves in their veils as entirely to conceal from view the whole of their countenances. On my asking Giorgio the reason of this unexpected proceeding, he stated that these women belonged to the Druse sect, and were as strictly secluded from a stranger's gaze as any daughter of Islam. He further pointed out to our notice the difference of costume by which they were easily to be distinguished from their Maronite sisters; their veil and garments being all of sombre sad-coloured hues, and the "horn" of much shorter dimensions and less "exalted."

The bump of "veneration" must have been very slightly developed on Giorgio's pericranium, for even the shrouded forms and nun-like appearance of these poor creatures, could not deter him from opening on them *en passant*, a volley of his wit; and though one of them ventured to give a reply, it was without un-

covering her face, and with every symptom of fear and trepidation.

It would be out of place here, to enter into speculations as to the religious tenets of the Druses, of which so much has been written and so little really known; but they, to all appearance, derive their origin from the remotest antiquity. The peculiar characteristic of the "horn" may also be traced very far back through the mist of ages, and it is evidently frequently alluded to in the Scriptures. Be that as it may, and whether becoming or not, there is no doubt that this ornament is much more befitting the ladies' heads, than the brows of their husbands!

We were now fast approaching the extremity of that valley, which it had taken us nearly three hours to skirt. The hoary summit of the Gebel Knessi (or Mountain of the Church) arose high above our heads; and crossing by a rude stone bridge over the roaring torrent, whose course we had so long traced through the dark depths of the wooded chasm below, we—after a steep and sudden ascent—found ourselves in

the town of Hemānah, and fronting the residence of the Grand Prince of the Mountain.

Everything betokened here a state of active warfare: horses ready saddled and caparisoned at their pickets, and bands of swarthy wild-looking mountaineers, armed up to the very teeth, either burnishing their accoutrements, smoking their pipes, or lazily reclining in the sun, with all that air of true military *nonchalance* which might have done honour to a group of idle ensigns at the corner of the Barrack-square, or that of the Circulating Library in the "High Street" of country-quarters!

On announcing the object of my visit, we were ushered into a large ante-room filled with the armed retainers of the Emir, who, immediately on hearing that an English officer had come to obtain an interview, politely sent us an invitation to enter an inner apartment, at the further end of which—on a slight elevation of the floor, which was covered with carpets and cushions—sate His Highness, with a circle of courtiers standing respectfully around him, whilst he was apparently engaged in dictating

to a couple of secretaries, who, half kneeling and half sitting, were busily employed in committing his words to paper.

The Emir Beschir Cassim Shehab, appeared to be about seventy years of age, dressed in the simplest and plainest style, and with a homely good-natured expression of countenance, in which were to be seen but few traces of the stronger passions. A large white turban overshadowed his mild benign-looking countenance, which was divested of both beard and whisker,* and only adorned by a short grey moustache, amongst whose snowy tufts might be still discovered a few traces of a more fiery colour.

The old gentleman immediately placed us on the carpet beside him, and ordered pipes, narghilis,† and coffee; but on presenting to him my letter of introduction,—which was

* The Mountaineers always wear the moustache, but some, in addition, sport noble flowing beards, whilst others shave off entirely this manly ornament of the face.

† The water-pipe, of such general use in the mountains.

duly translated by Giorgio,—he became quite overwhelming in his kindness, calling me his son, and giving me at the same time a most paternal embrace, he launched out with all the flowery language of the East in praise of "El Commodore," whom he styled the Son of Valour and Star of Bravery, and hoped soon to see me tread in his footsteps. This was all very flattering; but compliments are but indifferent food for empty stomachs, and of which, certain sensations not to be mistaken, soon convinced us. We had, however, most opportunely timed our visit: it was near the hour of the noonday meal, and with undisguised satisfaction we saw the attendants place before us a low frame of ebony inlaid with mother of pearl, on which was duly deposited a large metal tray containing all the "delicacies of the season." Kid and fowls stewed in rice—egg fruit stuffed with forced meat—sweet "knāfeh,"*—sour curds, and heaps of flat cakes doing duty for bread, formed the principal ingredients of the feast.

* A mixture of flour, honey, and sugar.

His Highness, though he preferred the primitive mode of eating with Adam's knives and forks—viz., his fingers—had considerately provided his guests with a few of those articles. However, on the principle of doing at Rome as the Romans do, we followed his good example, and soon displayed as much dexterity as our princely host in tearing off legs and wings of "pillau'd" fowls, and cleverly jerking cunningly-fashioned balls of rice into our expectant wide opening mouths; nor did the Emir suffer us to lag in our useful occupation, for ever and anon would he—with what is here considered the very acme of courtesy and politeness—with his own princely digits, tear asunder huge morcels of flesh or fowl, and, placing them before us, entreated that we would eat our fill.

Having satisfied the cravings of hunger,*

* Orientals have a strange way of shewing that they have enjoyed a good meal; and at the end of a feast it is taken rather as a compliment by the host—start not, refined reader—to "eructate" in his face, whilst he gravely brings his hand to his head as he pronounces to his guest the word "Sakha," to which the latter replies "Allah khulbuk."

washed our hands and mouths over a metal ewer, and resumed the intellectual occupation of smoking and drinking coffee, the Emir gradually became more communicative; our conversation running of course chiefly on the movements of the enemy, and our intended operations against him.

His Highness informed us that he had then in readiness about 2500 infantry and 500 cavalry; but that, in consequence of the scarceness of money and provisions, he could with difficulty keep them together. On my expressing a wish to see some of his troops under arms, he gave the necessary orders, and in a short time we were told that the "parade" was formed.

The Emir sent his brother Abdallah to take us to the spot where they were assembled, which we found to be an oblong level space or terrace, of about a hundred and fifty yards in length, overlooking on one side the beautiful Valley of Hemānah, and commanded in its turn by the stupendous hills behind, and more immediately by a long range of flat-roofed stone buildings, where—we were informed—

was located the Prince's Hāreem, together with several of the female relations of his principal Emirs and Sheikhs, who, during their own absence in the field, had chosen this as a place of security for their families.

On a low stone terrace, immediately at the foot of these buildings, we took up our station, and were soon amply repaid for the fatigues we had undergone, by the novel and stirring scene which immediately presented itself.

Firing off muskets and pistols (their usual custom on every joyous occasion), crowds of rude and wild-looking—though well-armed mountaineers—advanced in a most disorderly manner, and ranged themselves three or four deep along that side of the area which faced our position. These troops would certainly not have passed muster on a review-day in the Phœnix or Hyde Park; yet, brave, hardy, and active, they were no doubt well adapted for the irregular guerilla warfare of their native mountains.

They had scarcely placed themselves in some sort of order, when louder shouts and an

increased discharge of fire-arms announced fresh arrivals, and we were soon agreeably surprised to see the Emir Beschir himself, mounted on a noble charger, proudly curvet into the square at the head of all his Mountain Nobility, glittering with their gorgeous dresses, shining arms, and the splendid trappings of their prancing coursers, which they appeared to manage with exquisite grace and horsemanship; whilst their severe bits kept the proud and fiery animals in the most complete state of subjection.

We now beheld before us the very *élite* of the chivalry of Lebanon, and if their deeds corresponded with their warlike appearance, well might they be deemed invincible!

The old fables of the Centaurs—tales of Parthian horsemanship—Numidian dexterity —and all the Eastern Barbarian splendour of the Mamelukes, were now vividly recalled to memory, and exemplified by this brilliant cavalcade; and, as the several Sheikhs adn Emirs successively galloped into the square, managing their steeds with inimitable skill,

whilst they suddenly drew them up on their haunches, we could not refrain from loud expressions of admiration and applause.

The cavalcade divided itself into two parties, placing themselves at opposite sides of the quadrangle, and made every preparation for what was evidently to be a display of horsemanship,—a warlike tournament,—or "passage of arms." Nor was the usual concomitant of the good olden times, to this chivalrous sport—that great stimulant to deeds of renown and valour: the approving smiles of beauty—now wanting to grace the lists, or encourage the combatants.

The appearance of the Emir Beschir was the signal for sundry mystic-looking figures closely shrouded in white garments, to occupy as spectators, the terraced roof immediately above us; and although their features were completely hidden from view, and their shapes concealed under the folds of capacious veils, still the whiteness and fine texture of their flowing drapery convinced me at a glance that

I was now gazing on the female aristocracy of the Mountain, on the—no doubt—lovely forms of the "Ladies of the Land;" and in this belief I was confirmed by Giorgio, who whispering, told me that they were the wives and daughters of the Emir Beschir and of the principal chieftains under his command.

For a few seconds a breathless silence prevailed, when on a given signal sabres were drawn, the opposite parties advanced at full speed, each cavalier selecting an opponent, whom he apparently attacked with the greatest fury; and in this mimic fray were closely imitated all the most marked features of Arab warfare: the impetuous charge—the headlong flight—blows fiercely dealt, and as dexterously parried or avoided; but what most fixed our attention was the admirable command they appeared to have over the fiery high-bred animals, of which each rider appeared to form a component part.

In the midst of the most rapid career, these noble creatures would throw themselves so

suddenly on their haunches, that the violent concussion of their metalled hoofs* against the flinty ground, made sparks and pebbles fly about in every direction. Anon they would turn, resume in an instant their pristine speed, wheel to the right and left, charge, and fly, all at the same lightning pace, and apparently with equal ease to themselves and to their matchless riders.

But, behold! the venerable old Chief raises aloft his crooked scymitar: as if by magic the tumult ceases, and in an instant the opposite parties are again ranged apart, still and motionless, save the palpitating flanks, expanding nostrils, and quivering limbs of their now foaming chargers.

Long and slender staves were next brought into the arena, and distributed amongst the combatants, a preliminary,—as Giorgio said, —to the warlike game of the "Djereed," so famed in Eastern annals.

* The horses are shod throughout the East with a flat plate of iron, which nearly covers the whole hoof. —*Vide* Appendix at the end of the volume.

Whilst this was going on, I took Giorgio aside. "Briccone!" said I, "during the hottest of the fray I saw your eye wandering from deeds of valour to the glance of beauty; and I also got a glimpse of the lovely face from which, in that moment of excitement, the veil was cast negligently aside, and disclosed charms you appeared to be scrutinizing with very marked attention. Find out, 'vi prego,'—but do it quietly,—who and what is the Houri whose dark glance can thus turn the liver to water, and the heart to ashes."—"Siate tranquillo," whispered he; "I have already found out all about her: she is the daughter of Solyman Shehab of El Haded, a near relation of the Emir Beschir, and her name is ——" Here the clattering of hoofs put an end to our interesting dialogue, and *the ensuing tumult, accompanied by clouds of darts flying about in every direction, announced the commencement of the "Game of the Djereed."*

Now was manifested—if possible—still greater hardihood and skill than before, in

the management of both horse and weapon. At the first onset, single cavaliers in succession would gallop out of their respective ranks, charge close up to their adversaries, cast with unerring aim the quivering missile; and then, suddenly wheeling round, take refuge amidst their own party, closely pursued by the object of attack, who either dexterously parried the approaching dart with his own javelin—avoided it by stooping low over his charger's arching neck—or caught it in his grasp in the midst of its lightning course, and hurled it back after his now flying foe.

However, as they became more excited by the sport—after a few hard blows had been given and received—the scene assumed a more confused and angry character: horses crossed each other in every direction; the grooms were scrambling under their feet, busily engaged in picking up the fallen darts; a few accidents had occurred; and what was before a mere joyous pastime—threatened to assume the sterner features of actual combat; when the Grand Prince—who, after casting the first

djereed, had come and stationed himself by our side—gave the signal to disperse.

* * * * *

We mounted our horses, and amidst a profusion of "Mā Sālemehs,"† joyful shouts, and volleys of musketry from our Mountain friends, turned our steps towards Beyrout, whose gates we did not reach till long after midnight.

† Mā Sālemeh, "with peace," is the parting salutation common to all the East.

CHAPTER VI.

A SPURT OR TWO OVER THE PLAINS OF SYRIA, WITH A FEW OTHER INCIDENTS.

"Such was Zuleïka—such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her alone;
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart, whose softness harmonized the whole,
And, oh! that eye was in itself a soul."

BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

"A DAUGHTER of Solyman Shehab of El Hāded, a near relation of the Emir Beschir, and her name is ——" Thus far had Giorgio got in describing this Mountain Princess—this Houri of Lebanon—when our interesting conversation was suddenly interrupted, as the reader will recollect, and who is, no doubt,

likewise anxious to know her real nomenclature; but whether that name be amongst the Eastern sounding appellations of Hinda, or Fatima, or Zuleïka, or Sheri—to him it can little matter: suffice it to say, that on the night in question, around my campaigning couch, as seen through the misty curtains of slumber, fought fierce turbaned cavaliers, and flitted veiled mysterious beauties—that the following morning, inflamed with a new and sudden zeal for geographical knowledge, the subjects of my most minute inquiries were, the road leading to, and the situation of, "El Hāded." But time flew on apace—bloody War, as if tired of carnage, appeared overcome with sudden drowsiness. Ibrahim Pasha—her, till lately, favoured minion—reposed quietly at Damascus; and we imitated so laudable an example at Beyrout, where the British Staff had now full leisure to follow the occupations and amusements prompted by their several inclinations. *Mine* led me daily to the neighbourhood of a mountain village situated on the first rise of the Lebanon, about six or seven miles from head-

quarters. The ride thither was so delightful —at one time winding under the sombre hues of those ancient pines planted by the celebrated Fakir-el-Deen, or diving into the thick masses of cactus which met overhead—then anon overshadowed by the feathery palm, the dark shades of the olive, or verdure of the gay mulberry tree—presenting so much variety, and possessing such attractions, that my horse, on emerging from the gloomy portals of the city-gates, invariably turned his head in this direction, and I as unconsciously always allowed him to have his own way.

On one occasion—and well do I remember the day—having slung over my shoulder a trusty companion: the well tried old double-barrelled gun—and carelessly wandered along for five or six miles; I left my horse at a peasant's cottage, and strolled up the neighbouring mountain in quest of game. In this pursuit I had long toiled without any success, and was returning towards my steed, when accosted by a fine-looking lad of fourteen or fifteen, apparently engaged in the same voca-

tion as myself; for he also was provided with an apology for a fowling-piece in the shape of an old Tower musket. In the Desert, men are less strangers to each other than in the crowds of cities and of civilized life. We entered into conversation, and the offer of a little English powder and shot, soon so strongly cemented our friendship, that the youth invited me to accompany him to his house, which was hard by, in order to partake of the pipe of good fellowship and hospitality; which offer I gladly accepted.

We soon arrived at a large stone-building, beautifully situated on a wide terrace overlooking the extensive and verdant plain at our feet, and the blue waters of the Mediterranean beyond. Outside this edifice, on the verge of the plateau, stood a detached kiosk, as we approached which, several mountaineers issued forth, and by their obsequious attentions to my companion, proved him to be a person of some consideration; a conjecture that was speedily confirmed, when entering the pavilion—whose floor was overspread with rich cushions and

carpets—he in an authoritative tone of voice called for coffee and pipes, which immediately made their appearance.

"And what, my fine fellow," said I—in not the purest Arabic—"what may your name be?"

"The Emir Narsouf Shehab, son of the Emir Solyman," proudly replied the youngster.

The deuce it is! then—thinks I to myself—this may not, after all, prove a blank day! However, Mr. Narsouf did not leave me long to my reflections, but immediately put the same question I had applied to him. On my satisfying him as to this point, "Mashallah!" exclaimed he, examining me from head to foot, and evidently surprised that an English officer should so far demean himself* as to appear in such a disreputable dress—for be it remembered, I sported at the time my well-worn, soiled, and blood-stained shooting toggery. "But," added he immediately, "Anna furkhan shoufuk," (I am delighted to see you,) and calling one of

* The Easterns are fond of displaying their finery on every occasion, and men of rank are nearly always "en grande tenue."

the attendants, he whispered something in his ear, of which I could only distinguish the words " Eben el Commodor."

The man immediately departed, but soon returned, and on communicating with the young Chief, the latter arose, saying that the Princess his mother—anxious to shew attention to any of the Commodore's name—desired the pleasure of seeing, and invited me to accompany him to her presence. My costume was not exactly suited for ladies' society, particularly that of princesses: however, it was too good an opportunity to let slip; therefore, requesting my young friend to make all the requisite apologies on that score, I immediately followed him. On quitting the kiosk, we crossed the plateau, and leaving all the attendants outside, entered by a winding passage into an extensive area, enclosed by a high, massive wall, and thickly planted with jessamine, cypress, and orange trees, the latter —even at this late season of the year—in full bloom, and whose flowers strongly scented with their rich perfume the surrounding atmosphere.

The inclosure formed an oblong; at the further end of which, in a spacious apartment, or rather deep open verandah, and reclining against cushions on the carpeted floor, I first beheld the fair denizens of this mountain "dhair."* They were three in number, and, politely rising at our approach, discovered the tall and stately form of an old lady decked in the "extreme mode" of mountain fashion—a towering golden horn sparkling with precious stones, on her head, whence depended the long and flowing veil; which, however, did not at present perform the envious office of concealing those fine features and face, where strong traces of beauty might still be discerned. She looked and moved a princess; and the young Emir, presenting me to her as his mother, pointed to the closely-

* "Dhair" is the Arabic for palace, which appellation is here applied to the many solidly constructed, square, stone buildings, perched on every projecting point of Lebanon, and belonging to its Sheikhs and Emirs—the feudal nobility of the land.

muffled and retiring forms behind her as his sisters.

"Allah wo Sālun (you are welcome); Fādḍal, be seated," majestically said this modern representative of our good Queen Bess in her latter days. They tucked their legs under them; I extended mine in the most easy position I could devise; and being all thus comfortably established, the old lady thrice clapped her hands; when some female attendants—headed by a remarkably tall and ugly-looking Negress,—whose neck and arms were thickly bespangled with golden ornaments—brought in coffee, pipes, and mountain narghilis. The sociable occupation of inhaling the aroma of the weed gradually dispelled that reserve which, at the commencement, had been assumed by the younger ladies. Conversation, at first confined to the old princess and myself, now became general. They found the use of their tongues—forgot their veils—in the earnestness of some question, with a movement of impatience, that of my nearest

neighbour was thrown carelessly aside, and disclosed—what I almost expected to see—the same radiant countenance and brilliant dark eye, whose piercing glances had so completely dazzled me from the terrace top at Hemānah!

A slight cloud passed over the brow of the old princess; when the youngest daughter—probably not wishing the whole weight of her revered parent's wrath, at such an act of impropriety, to fall solely on her sister—with a hearty laugh immediately unmasked, and shewed me—not the dark Eastern characteristics so strongly marked in the first object of my admiration—but the fair, laughing face, and those sunny flaxen locks, which are almost peculiar to the matchless daughters of our own happy isle. The fair Sheri—for so it appeared she was called—was indeed a happy, laughter-loving creature; and—the ice of formality being thus suddenly broken—I was overwhelmed with questions by these two charming sisters, whilst enjoying a privilege, I believe, scarcely ever conceded to a stranger: that of being treated like an old friend of the

house, and obtaining admittance to the harem of one amongst the most powerful chiefs of Lebanon.

"But," petulantly added my talkative little friend, Mademoiselle Sheri,—who, about a year younger than her more reserved, and, in my humble opinion, more fascinating sister, could scarcely have yet seen her seventeenth summer,—"you are not such a stranger as you may imagine, and it is not the first time we have had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Exactly so," replied I; "you allude to a period not very remote, when certain Peris were seen hovering over the Brave, encouraging by their celestial smiles noble deeds of mortal prowess and valour; and wounding, moreover," added I, looking significantly at the elder sister, "some of the spectators, with lightning glances, not always deadened by the thick folds of the envious bourkah (the veil)."

This "badinage" tickled the merry being's fancy amazingly. She unmercifully quizzed her sister on the subject, and then suddenly

changing the object of attack,—"And would Jénabuk (your lordship) be pleased to inform a poor mountain maiden, of the potent reasons which induced your excellency to equip yourself like a soldier and an officer on that occasion, when now, that—through especial grace and favour, on being admitted to beauty's bower — you appear there more like——"

"Tush, tush!" said the old lady, interfering, "you are getting rude, my child, and will offend the gentleman."

But I was too highly amused by the *naïveté* of the lively girl either to feel or look angry, and I begged her to proceed and finish her sentence.

"No," said she; "since you appear so good-natured, I will have mercy; but why did you not put on to-day your nishan and large bournetta?" alluding to the epaulettes and cocked hat.

I explained, as well as I could, that this was not the most convenient dress in which to follow the diversion of the chase; but pro-

mised—should they allow me to renew my visit—I would endeavour, on such occasion, to appear in a costume more befitting their presence. This request being graciously acceded to, I was about to depart, when a tray covered with refreshments was brought in, placed on a low stand, like what I had seen at the Emir Beschir's, and I was so strongly urged by all present to partake of the repast now spread out before us, that I could not refuse; when, after likewise imbibing some draughts of excellent Lebanon wine, I took leave, highly delighted with my visit, and followed by pressing invitations to repeat it whenever I should chance to pass that way.

There are some people whom the long intercourse of years will not tend to place on a footing of intimacy. Others, again, we occasionally meet, with whom, after an hour's conversation, one feels as if in the presence of old and intimate acquaintances; and such was the sensation I experienced on leaving this delightful family, where all the frankness of primitive simplicity was united with the *ton*,

easy manners, and that total absence of awkwardness or *mauvaise honte* which so distinctly marks "gentle blood" in every region of the globe, whether amidst the crags and precipices of Lebanon, or the crowded saloons of London or Paris.

It may not, perhaps, be here out of place to say a few words concerning the dress of the upper classes of the mountain ladies, which varies greatly from that adopted in the cities of the plain and along the sea-coast of Syria. The characteristic difference consists in the tontura, or "horn," which has already been mentioned, but which we found was confined entirely to the married women. That ornament of the female peasantry of Lebanon, is a tube of hollow silver, or merely plated metal; but the higher classes lavish the most unbounded expense on this and other personal adornments.* The tontura of the lady of the Emir Solyman was distinguished by its supe-

* This appendage is never removed from the head even during the hours of rest, and the matrons of Lebanon sleep with the tontura fixed on their heads.

rior magnificence. A cone of pure gold, upwards of two feet in length; it was profusely studded with rubies and other precious stones, and fastened to the head by a band entirely covered with the finest pearls; whilst the hair, elaborately braided, and mixed with artificial locks of silk, thickly bespangled with small golden coins, hung down over the shoulders in innumerable tresses, partly concealed by a capacious veil of the most delicate texture and snow-white spotless hue, which, from the summit of the tontura, waved round and partially concealed the figure with its graceful and ample folds, and—as occasion required—might be employed entirely to hide the face.

The dress of the young Princesses more nearly resembles that of the ladies of Beyrout: the becoming "amta," or turban, surmounted by its golden plate, whence gracefully depends the large blue silken tassel, is coquettishly set on one side of the head, and from underneath its folds escape the numerous plaited tresses, which—falling thickly over the short jelic and silken khumbaiz, or flowing outer

pelisse—frequently, by their luxuriant growth partly conceal even the folds of the zinhar, or sash, loosely fastened round the waist, and allowed, with studied negligence, to fall over the hips; the ends hanging down till they meet the loose light silken shintien, which—blush not, fair readers!—doing duty for *inexpressibles*, fall in ample folds over the naked instep, so as oft to hide even the henna-stained little toes.

The toilet of these maids of the mountain is, however, not complete, until the jetty khohol has lent to the eye its soft and languishing lustre; until a neat little cross—the symbol of their faith—has been indelibly stained in blue, in the centre of their snowy, heaving breast; and until—like Aurora—the blushing tips of their fingers proclaim that all-powerful influence of the deep-staining henna.*

* Poets call it the "rosy" henna; it is, however, of a dark, orange hue, sometimes nearly approaching to brown. The "khohol" is powdered antimony, used to give a languishing appearance to the eye, by being inserted under the lid with a small silver instrument.

In performing the interesting office of ladies' maid, I had nearly forgotten the chibouque; and the fire-side Reader or sentimental young Miss will no doubt consider "smoking" in any other light than as a female accomplishment, and maybe will picture to their mind's eye an old gipsy crone, seated under her cart, and inhaling from a dingy little "doudeen" the stifling emanations of nauseous tobacco;—but never would they be more greatly mistaken than in such a comparison;—and smoking must be seen as practised by the fair sex in the East to be *fairly* judged and duly appreciated; for the long slender jessamine or rosewood tube, surmounted by its rich amber mouth-piece, and emitting fragrant fumes, rendered still more aromatic by the sweet lips which exhale them, has the same attractions—as gracefully toyed with, by the small white hand of a Syrian damsel—that the expressive fan—the speaking "abancco"—possesses, when used with such powerful effect by the dark-eyed and mantillaed daughters of Cadiz or Seville.

My daily rides and solitary rambles now

generally tended to the Dhair at El Hāded, where many is the pleasant hour I have passed with the old "Sitte"* and her charming daughters; and I occasionally met there many of their friends, relations, and acquaintances —the female aristocracy of the Mountain— who, I have no doubt, often came to satisfy their curiosity by having a peep at the Frankish stranger.

I found that this constant intercourse with the "Ladies of the Land"—for, according to Byron, female society is always the strongest stimulant to the acquisition of a strange tongue—rapidly improved my knowledge of the Arabic language, and I was soon enabled to understand and reply to the numerous, and often strange questions our increasing intimacy frequently gave rise to, and which I was sometimes sufficiently puzzled to answer.

I now learnt that the old Emir Solyman was the only member of the Shehab family who retained the tenets of Islam; but although

* The title of "Sitte" answers to "My Lady."

constantly refusing—on principle—to change his religion, he allowed his family to be brought up in the Maronite or Roman-Catholic belief, to which creed they made some efforts to convert me, and appeared rather surprised on learning that a Protestant might—as well as themselves—be a Christian.*

The Emir Solyman and his second son were with the irregular cavalry then hanging about the enemy's outposts, and closely observing their movements beyond the Anti-Libanus. The eldest son—the hope of the family, and apparently the idol of his mother and sisters—had been seized by Ibrahim Pasha, together with several other Mountain Chiefs; embarked at Acre for Egypt, and dark rumours were then afloat of their having been sent in chains up the Nile, to work at the distant gold mines of Sennaar and Kordofan. This melancholy

* The Maronite part of the population of Lebanon is completely under the control of the Priests, who are—generally speaking—an ignorant and bigoted set, and it is through their means that the French have always maintained such a preponderance in the "Mountain."

subject, when broached, always threw a gloom over the family, and was the cause of their greatest anxiety. The unfortunate Emir Youssuf was often the theme of conversation, and when the news arrived of the Commodore's being at Alexandria, the old "Sitte" implored me to write, and use my influence in begging him to obtain the release of her son from such a state of dreadful bondage. The imploring look of the old parent, and the eloquent appeals of my fair young friends, were irresistible, and a very Stoic would have been moved. "Not only will I write," was my reply, "but should my application be unsuccessful, I promise, as soon as the campaign is at an end, to proceed myself to Egypt and find out your son, be he in the very heart of Africa."

"Commodore el Sghier" ("little Commodore," for that was now generally my title,) "if you bring back the prop of my old age—my beloved Youssuf, you will have a claim on my eternal gratitude, and nothing which you can ask of me or my family shall be refused to you."

"Tyeb," said I, "a bargain! to which you young ladies are witnesses, and Inshallah (with God's help) I will bring him back, and shall not fail to redeem the pledge you have just given me!"

* * * * *

Ibrahim Pasha had positively broken up his winter-quarters at Damascus, and the Turkish force now assumed some appearance of activity, to harass him in his projected retreat towards the confines of Egypt. British staff officers were despatched in every direction to stir up the mountain tribes; and one fine morning in December, long before daylight, I found myself with my friend Giorgio—after a capital cup of coffee, and a tender parting scene with his family—mounted on my gallant little grey Arab "Sidon," and *en route* for the hills of Naplouse.

We have elsewhere given some account of the ensuing operations; war—except that waged on the sylvan race—being foreign from the title and subjects of these "Sporting" pages; and we will briefly state what we *might* have done, as

votaries of Nimrod, had not more serious, though less pleasing avocations, occupied our thoughts and time.

In our subsequent roving and bandit, Bedouin-like life, we traversed Syria in every direction, crossed the ranges of Lebanon and of Anti-Libanus, explored the Adjelloun and the Naplouse hills, galloped over the plains of Esdralon and Sharon even to the confines of the Desert, and were in all parts kindly treated, and indiscriminately received hospitality from every tribe and sect. The Maronite, the Druse, the Metouali, the Syrio-Greek, the Israelite, and the Armenian, all gladly administered to our wants. Our transient abode was occasionally the ornamented kiosk of the city, sometimes the humble mountain cabin;—oft have we feasted with fat, well-fed friars, and sometimes broken bread with the wandering Arab under the shelter of his dark camel-hair tent;—at one time fugitives —at another heading numerous bands of wild mountaineers, or of the no less wild horsemen of the Desert. Ever shall I with pleasure recall

those stirring times of adventure and excitement,—those few weeks which terminated the Syrian campaign,—and which passed so rapidly and pleasantly to myself and a few chosen companions.

As has been said, we had little leisure to devote to the sports of the field, but the old "double-barrel" continued nevertheless my inseparable companion, and I would occasionally get a flying shot in the mountains, or breathe my little Arab on the wide plains which sometimes stretched out far before us.

Although the latter abound with every species of sylvan inhabitants: wild boar, gazelles, wolves, jackals, foxes, and waterfowl of all kinds—the mountains of Syria are singularly deficient in this respect,—a few hill-partridge being nearly the only game I ever met with in the various ranges on this side of the river Jordan. The latter is, however, a noble bird, and beats in size and appearance any of the tribe I have ever chanced, in different parts of the world, to meet with. I remember on one occasion being stationed with

a small party of Druse horse in the Boccah,* at a village near the foot of the Anti-Libanus; time hung heavily on hand; I took up my gun, and slowly ascending the steep side of the mountain, rambled on without getting a shot, until I had entered the belt of snow which ran along the upper ridge of the hills. At this moment a fine hawk, swiftly sailing along at my feet, received the contents of one barrel, and ere I had time to load again with shot, a large bird—roused by the report—*broke covert* from under a few stunted bushes some fifty yards off; but instead of rising on the wing, ran with incredible rapidity along the bare and naked side of the mountain just clear of the snowy border.

My right barrel contained a ball; but I levelled, fired, and had the satisfaction to see that I had done so with effect: the bird, suddenly arrested in his rapid career, tumbled over once or twice, and, rolling to the bottom

* The Sehel-el-Boccah is the plain separating Mount Lebanon from the Anti-Libanus.

of a deep ravine, was there secured by the son of the village Sheikh, who had accompanied me on the occasion. It chanced to be the "mountain partridge," a bird of most game appearance, about the size of a pheasant, and proved a great addition to the barley cakes and sour curds which constituted our evening meal. Giorgio, who was a bit of a *bon vivant*, declared it *eccellente*, and our old host,—a fine-looking white-bearded Sheikh—also shared the feast, whilst listening to the "Orientally" exaggerated account his son was giving, of the immense distance at which I had knocked over the bird with a single bullet.

But though convinced that, generally speaking, the mountains of Syria would not repay a day's hard fag to the sportsman over their rugged heights, the extensive plains at their base—as has already been said—abound with every species of game; and this we had numerous opportunities of witnessing along the Valley of Jordan, and over the wide and level expanses of Esdralon and Sharon.

In the former, though the roar of the furi-

ous lion is no longer heard amidst its jungly banks, still—even the present wooded state of the "Ghor,"—the sedgy banks of the river,—and its dense thickets of oleander,—would, at a time when it was scarcely inhabited—in the days of the Patriarchs—have afforded capital covert for—and been a likely resort of—the King of the Forests.

Returning one day from a reconnoissance across the Adjelloun hills, after being deserted by a body of irregular cavalry who had fled at the approach of the Egyptians, my friend Hunter, Giorgio, and myself, had, in a sorry and solitary plight, just forded the swollen waters of the Jordan, when we neared the straggling camp of a Bedouin tribe, whose black tents were pitched on the high ground overlooking the western bank of the river. Although well armed, still the smallness of our number and the jaded state of our steeds, rendered these lawless sons of the Desert rather an object of suspicion, as we reflected with what ease they might under present circumstances either capture, or,—what their plun-

dering habits rendered still more probable in these troublous times,—after stripping us to the skin, turn us adrift to shift for ourselves as best we might. These very pleasing anticipations were by no means dissipated, when, on a nearer approach, the swarthy and ferocious countenances of the men darkly scowled upon us; whilst their wild-looking and half-naked mates, with tattooed faces, arms, and breasts, and blue-stained lips, gazed on us from the entrance of the tents, with looks which seemed to say how eagerly they would aid and abet any work of violence or pillage.

Here, however,—as in most other dilemmas,—we found there is nothing like putting a bold face on the matter; so riding up with apparent confidence to the Sheikh's tent, we asked the way to Bysan, and requested a guide to conduct us thither, inquiring at the same time whether a body of our troops had gone on before? and on receiving a reply in the negative, I gave directions for them to follow us when they came up.

I know not whether the mention of these

"men in buckram" influenced the conduct of the Sheikh, but we now found him uncommonly civil: he invited us to dismount, which, however, we declined, and, accompanied by a lad to shew us the way, were preparing to take our departure, when I was struck by the appearance of a magnificent Syrian greyhound. These animals greatly resemble the Persian dogs of the same species, so common in the sporting districts of India: they are small, with long silky hair about the legs and tail, and, although slight and weak in appearance, are nevertheless possessed of wonderful speed, which is frequently used with success in the pursuit of the gazelle.

In the East, to express admiration of anything, is considered as a hint that its possession would be desirable; and "upon this hint" spake the Sheikh, when he pressed us to accept of the "khelb." On any other occasion I should perhaps have been tempted to avail myself of such an offer, but under present circumstances —as the noble animal would only have proved an incumbrance—with many thanks I refused

it; and taking our leave, under the auspices of our youthful guide we followed the direction of Bysan, which he assured us was close by.

We had just come within sight of the splendid remains of a Roman amphitheatre in its neighbourhood, when, suddenly emerging from the shelter of a ravine, a herd of gazelles bounded across our path. It was the work of a second to spring from my horse, level the old fowling-piece, and send a ball right and left into the midst of their scattered train; but apparently the shots did not tell, as they all continued with increased velocity in their rapid and springy course. However, the noble hound we have just mentioned, attracted no doubt by the report of the gun, came up, and viewing the flying game, with the greatest ardour stretched after it across the wide plain. The run, whilst it continued to be seen, was a pretty and exciting spectacle; but the gazelles evidently had too much law, and we soon lost sight of both the pursued and the pursuer, as they gained the hills which skirt the western bank of the Jordan,

and run northward towards the Lake of Tiberias.

We had on a former occasion, passed a few hours at Bysan, and although then under much more auspicious circumstances, whilst advancing with a large body of well-mounted followers, still our acquaintance, old Hassan, the Sheikh El Bellud, or chief of the village, received us in a friendly manner; provided barley for our horses, and, inviting us into the humble dwelling, which he shared with sundry lambs and kids, hastened to spread before us the best of what his larder afforded, consisting of coarse wheaten cakes baked on the heated stones, sour curds, and goat's milk cheese; but we were too hungry to be fastidious; and after diluting this unsavoury repast with a draught of boiled milk, intimated a wish to depart; having still before us a long march, as we purposed reaching on that evening the distant town of Jenain.

Our worthy host seemed annoyed at our not remaining for the night; but on inform-

ing him of the necessity we were under of proceeding, and requesting a guide, the old man offered to accompany us himself, and was soon mounted on—to all appearance—a sorry nag, whose neck still wore fresh and deeply-marked traces of firing—that universal remedy both for man and horse in this part of the world.

Leaving the Roman amphitheatre behind us on the right, we now trod on ground than which, none has been more marked in the annals of history both of ancient and modern times, as well as for the chivalrous deeds thereon performed during the Middle Ages. I allude to the plains of Esdralon, extending on one side, between Mount Thabor and the Naplouse range, and on the other betwixt Mount Carmel and the Jordan. On this spacious arena how oft has the fate of nations been decided! And to the long list of sanguinary records traced on its fertile mould with the blood of the Philistine, the Hebrew, the Roman, Greek, Saracen, Crusader, Tartar,

and more recently by that of the Gaul,* was now probably about to be added the final struggle between the Turk and Egyptian!

Our guide, old Hassan, who professed to be a great sportsman, had pressed me on a former occasion to come and spend some days at Bysan, when he engaged to shew me good sport over the "Sehel-el-Eben-é-Mirge," as the Arabs term the plain of Esdralon. He now reminded me of my promise to that effect, and I replied, with the usual "Inshallah," (God willing,) I would do so whenever the toils of war being ended, should leave leisure for the recreations of the chase.

As we proceeded across the plain, the number and variety of game we met with confirmed me in my resolution to redeem a pledge at first but carelessly given. Large herds of gazelles appeared every five minutes, and were again rapidly lost behind the wide range of the horizon; the sedgy swamps we passed in the first part of our course, swarmed with

* The French defeated here a large body of Arabs and Turks in 1799.

snipe, teal, and other water-fowl; whilst gravely stalking across the shallow pools, I often recognised the beautiful white plumage and graceful attitudes of a former Indian acquaintance: the almost forgotten "Paddy bird."* Nor amidst this numerous feathered tribe were reminiscences of old England wanting; and the swallow, just escaped from the inclemency of our northern winter, had come to this genial clime, and was now lightly skimming along the ground and closely following in our wake, attracted probably by the numerous insects with which our horses were surrounded.

We were jogging thus quietly along the base of the Naplouse hills, which here terminated by an abrupt and almost precipitous descent into the plain—old Hassan highly pleased that I should have been convinced of

* There are two varieties of this bird, which is of the crane species. The one is of a dark grey, and somewhat resembling the bittern in miniature; the other, of pure unspotted white. They mostly frequent, in India, the flooded rice grounds, or, as they are there termed, "paddy fields."

the truth of his assertions respecting "el side," the sport to be had—when something on the dark and rocky face of the mountain arrested the quick eye of the venerable Sheikh, who, with a sign to command silence, at once pulled up, and pointed towards some thick brushwood waving o'er the rocks high above our heads. A slight motion in the indicated covert, immediately informed me that some large animal was working its way through its low thorny branches, and put me on the *qui vive*, when suddenly a noble boar broke forth, and made rapidly towards the top of the hill. Had my first cap not missed, I might probably have given a better account of him, but he was just dipping into a hollow, when a ball from the second barrel, knocked up the dust under his feet as he disappeared from our anxious gaze.

"Load again quickly," impatiently cried old Hassan, "and follow me." I obeyed his injunction, and hastily ramming down a ball, clapped spurs into the flanks of little Sidon, who—though after undergoing a march of

seven or eight hours—was soon put on his mettle, and carried me gallantly after the old sportsman, now thundering along at a fearful pace, with an object which was soon evident —that of cutting off a herd of wild hog, which, emerging from some tall sedgy reeds in the plain, were endeavouring to gain the shelter of the hill.

Luckily succeeding in heading them, they changed their course, and made straight across the open ground, the old Sheikh and myself continuing in hot pursuit; and it was not till then that I duly appreciated the sterling qualities of the rough-coated, ill-fed, and sorry looking animal on which he was mounted. With my tired and overweighted little charger, I soon found I had no chance of keeping near him, but followed along as best I might in his rear, easily foreseeing what was about to happen. After a tolerably sharp spurt, he fast overhauled and turned the hindermost grunter, giving—or rather attempting to give him—in close succession, the contents of both pistols; and piggy then tried to "save his bacon" by

regaining the tall sedgy covert of the swampy marsh; but here I was ready to meet him; and the "khunzeer," (pig,) though not very formidable as to size, made a bold attempt to give me a charge, during which I opened a broadside from the double-barrel, which again sent him in the direction of old Hassan, whose sporting blood being completely up, was now fiercely galloping, scymitar in hand, to my assistance.

On that day it appeared doomed that my trusty old fowling-piece should play me false. Although with the muzzle nearly touching his head, I missed the brute; and pitching the gun to "jehanum;"* after fumbling for a second at the holsters—which, somehow or other, I could not open—valiantly drew my toledo, and making a ferocious slash at the now nearly-exhausted and panting, though furious young boar, which inflicted on his unclean carcase a wound that nearly severed off one of his ears, sent him directly under my horse's

* The Arabic appellation for the abode of Lucifer.

legs, no doubt with the kindly intent of disembowelling the gallant little steed. If such, however, were the friendly views he entertained, he was disappointed. Reinforcements were pouring in from all directions; the old Sheikh was near; Hunter and Giorgio had also arrived at the scene of action; but piggy, in the scramble amongst the horses' legs, had caused such confusion, that—to our shame be it avowed—he escaped all our glittering blades, and reached in safety his marshy stronghold, where it was impossible, for us to follow him.

But time, during our chase, had flown as fast as the little "khunzeer;" and when he left us—all looking very foolishly at each other—the deepening shadows gave warning that the lateness of the hour would render it impossible to reach Jenain. Old Hassan proposed our taking shelter in a shepherd's hut which he knew of in the mountains close by, and, delighted to find we should not have to bivouac *al fresco*, we gladly accompanied him, were hospitably received, spent the night as

usual without taking off our clothes, and moreover snugly wrapped up in warm quilts, which not only bestowed heat on our wearied frames, but also a goodly company of creeping things, with whom, however, we had now too long been on terms of intimacy to think of quarrelling.

The great plain of Esdralon is separated from that of Acre by the gently sloping hills of Nazareth, which are thickly sprinkled with the prickly and Valonia oak, whose graceful grouping strongly reminded us of English park scenery. These wooded and undulating hills and valleys continue with little intermission from Nazareth to Sephouri, where a sudden descent leads the traveller to the "sehel" (plain) of Acre, so famed of yore for the chivalrous and daring deeds of the Crusaders.

From the mound where once floated England's proud banner, under which reposed our lion-hearted monarch—from this spot, so interesting to a Briton, we now surveyed the ruined battlements of Acre, the sedgy banks

of the river Kishon, and the heights of Mount Carmel.

The plain of Acre is also mentioned in the annals of the chase so far back as the Crusades; and William of Tyre relates, that a certain king of Jerusalem, a descendant of old Godfrey of Bouillon, was here killed by a fall from his horse, in the pursuit of this his favourite amusement, and long mourned by his disconsolate queen, the (if I remember right) beautiful Melecintha.

In the present day, game of every sort here abounds; and the shipwrecked crew of the Zebra,* when encamped near the banks of the Kishon, found abundant occupation for their rifles and fowling-pieces; and whilst we were sumptuously entertained at Caïpha by that hospitable old gentleman, Catafago,†

* H. M. brig, Zebra, was wrecked near Caïpha, in the Bay of Acre, during the gale of the 2nd of December, 1840.

† Catafago is a well-known character in Syria, and has been honourably mentioned by nearly every traveller who has visited that country for the last thirty years.

a noble boar's head, sent by some of the officers to our host, proved that they had not of late been unsuccessful in their sport. Catafago was very anxious for us to stop a few days to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, assuring us that not only every species of smaller game was to be met with in the vicinity, but that the neighbouring rocks of Mount Carmel harboured numerous wild beasts, and amongst others, large and ferocious panthers. However, having some reason to doubt our host's assertion on this head, and being moreover hard pressed for time, we next morning before daylight—winding round the base of Elijah's Rock*—soon found ourselves galloping across the green and flower-enamelled plains of Sharon.

It was of importance that we should reach Jaffa by nightfall, and the distance being some seventy odd miles, we had not,—as may be imagined,—much time for contemplation; but, even in our rapid course, we could not help

* Mount Carmel is said to have been long the residence of the prophet Elijah.

admiring the novel scenery before us. It was in the month of January; and the recent rains had converted this wide expanse into a bright green carpet, thickly diversified with the brilliant colours of the anemone and the flowers of various bulbous plants, whose large projecting roots were frequently crushed under the hoofs of our panting steeds. The herds and flocks of the roving Arabs, with their dark tents dotted over the plain, were intermingled with numerous camels grazing at large, whose ungainly forms were a peculiar feature in this truly Oriental landscape. Within a few miles of Jaffa, extensive marshes, covered with the tall, waving, and graceful papyrus plant, harboured water-fowl of every description; and the freshly upturned ground in their vicinity, proved them to be thickly tenanted by the tusked boar.

If the mountains of Syria are scant of game, its plains amply make up for the deficiency, and that of Sharon may truly be called the sportsman's "land of promise."

Well do I recollect, on one occasion, coming

at a single stretch, and without pulling bridle, on my gallant steed: Sidon, from Mount Hebron (the burial-place of the old patriarchs) to Ramla, a distance of forty good miles. Thinking that my little Arab must now have had enough, and mounting my first charger,* —which had been hitherto led,—I started across country for Jaffa, a further distance of ten miles. Scarcely had I cleared the olive groves which surround the ancient Arimathea, when a large shaggy wolf started out of a hollow, and went away right in view. This sight was irresistible; even the old charger appeared to forget the fatigues of the day, as slightly touching his flanks, and giving him his head, he rapidly bounded after the gaunt ungainly animal.

The ground was splendid; a noble plain, which extended for miles, and broken only by gentle undulating slopes. At one time

* An old, flea-bitten, grey Arab, a present from Commodore Napier, and a horse of wonderful powers of endurance, who, on more than one occasion, has carried the author for seventeen or eighteen successive hours.

I gained so much on my quarry, that I drew out my long dragoon sword and prepared to deal him his *coup-de-grace;* but I should have known better. Even with a fresh horse I had before now, often in vain pursued these wary creatures; and, in the present instance, with a jaded steed—carrying, moreover, a heavy weight in arms and accoutrements—the attempt itself was folly; and, after a long gallop, I pulled up, and tried to regain the beaten track leading to Jaffa.

I had long wandered about, disturbing, in my erratic course, game of every description—foxes, jackalls, and gazelles innumerable—when a young Bedouin tending a herd of camels set me in the "way I should go," and, almost as tired as the old flea-bitten grey, I at last reached the embattled towers of Jaffa, so lately the active scene of warlike preparation, but where now all were anxiously anticipating the blessings attending the recent cessation of hostilities; for

> "Now upon Syria's land of roses
> Softly the smile of Peace reposes."

The ruthless Ibrahim had retired, the dogs of war were safely kennelled, the campaign was at an end, and, mindful of my promise, I hastened to Egypt's palmy groves—

"Her grots and sepulchres of Kings"—

and soon, tracing towards their source the turbid waters of the "giant Nile," my bark slowly and painfully battled against the majestic stream and a southerly breeze, as I proceeded in search of the exiled Emir: Youssuf Solyman Shehab.

CHAPTER VII.

GRAND CAIRO, AND A DAY OR TWO IN THE LYBIAN DESERT.

An astounding title—Great cry and little wool—The Khunjah—Plains of lower Egypt—Resemblance to Indian scenery—Dancing girls—Fishermen on the Nile—View of the Pyramids—Grand Cairo—Waghorn's Hotel—English comforts—A sporting doctor—The Pasha's stud at Shoubrah—Manner of feeding—The real Arabian of the Desert—A commotion—Egyptian brood mares—A rhinoceros—Snake charmers—An ophiophagus—The Western Magician—Trip to the Pyramids of Saccarah—An Abyssinian greyhound—A run after a fox—Broken ground—The Doctor's fall—End of the Chase—Return to Cairo.

CHAPTER VII.

GRAND CAIRO, AND A DAY OR TWO IN THE LYBIAN DESERT.

"Stern stalks the lion o'er the burning sands,
Hears the dread snake, and trembles as he stands;
Quick darts the scaly monster o'er the plain,
Fold after fold his undulating train,
And bending o'er the lake his crested brow,
Starts at the crocodile that gapes below."

BOTANIC GARDEN.

THE burning, boundless, and trackless waste, —that wide and unnavigable sea of moving sand,—where the illusive mirage misleads the weary wanderer, where the deadly simoon sweeps from off its desolate surface e'en the hardy "ship of the desert," the patient and enduring camel—THE LYBIAN DESERT—is an astonishing title wherewith to head a Sporting

Chapter; and will naturally lead to the conclusion of the latter being replete with hair-breadth 'scapes from dangers and destruction in every shape—by parching thirst, stifling and overwhelming sands, or the poisoned and withering blast of its scorching winds — of fierce encounters and bloody frays with hydras, and lions, and hippogriffs—of the lengthened chase of days and days after the fleet, untiring ostrich—or the eager pursuit of winged snakes and dragons, at the head of a troop of charmed and magic-dealing Psylli!—but lay not, good reader, the flattering unction of such exploits to thy expectant curiosity! for, in good sooth, all our wondrous deeds in this said Desert of Lybia were confined to alarming a few timid gazelles, and making sundry hares, foxes, and jackals, run for their lives and brushes.

We must, however, "hark back" to our former point of departure—as domiciled on board a large khunjah—painfully stemming, not the blue, but turbid and muddy waters of old Father Nile,—we were slowly progressing on the trail of rather a novel sport—hunting

a quarry hitherto unrecorded in the annals of the chase—"an Exiled Emir"—the scene of operations, the covert from which he was to be put on foot, being no less than that small tract extending to

> "Afric's lunar mountains, at the fountain
> Of that Egyptian tide whose birth
> Is hidden from the sons of earth:
> Deep in those solitary woods,
> Where oft the genii of the floods
> Dance round the cradle of the Nile,
> And hail the new-born Giant's smile:"

whilst my "monture" in this apparently hopeless pursuit was—as has been said—a "khunjah." But the reader, unless himself a very *conjuror*, will perhaps be rather puzzled to divine to what species the said animal might appertain: for his edification, therefore, be it known that a khunjah is a large boat, partly covered in like a Venetian gondola, with very comfortably-fitted apartments, and, —when not favoured in its progress up the river by a northern breeze,—is slowly tracked by the crew, who with a tow-line proceed at a

most tedious pace along the high banks of rich loamy mould, bordering its majestic stream.

A brother officer from Syria and myself, being thus comfortably installed in our floating castle, found abundance of occupation during the passage from Atfeh* to Cairo, which occupied four or five days. At this time of the year (it was in February), the climate of Egypt is delightful; the rich meadows of flowery bersing,—the red-flowered clover,—which in this fertile soil reached a height and luxuriance quite unknown to Europe, whilst numbers of cattle, buffaloes, and horses, all tethered in line, were browsing it down with the greatest regularity;—the tall and stately date-trees, darkening with their feathery branches the bright green of waving rice and barley; together with the delicious perfume of the bean-flower wafted on the cool and fragrant breeze; the melodious cooing of innumerable doves perched on the mimosa-trees, which dipped

* Atfeh is the point where the Mahmoudieh Canal from Alexandria, joins the Nile, the Canal being about fifty miles in length.

their falling branches into the noble stream below—all these and fifty other to us, novel sights, united to charm the senses, and to put us in the most happy and pleasing frame of mind.

A kind Providence hath showered every blessing on this favoured land; but its bounty seems, even from the earliest ages, constantly to have been sadly perverted by the iron hand of tyranny and misgovernment, of which, amidst all this profusion, the poor Fellah,—in his scanty garb and by his miserable appearance,—gives sad and mournful testimony; and should the heavy weight of retribution ever fall on those who have for their own selfish and ambitious ends, so ruthlessly inflicted misery and persecution on myriads of their species, then wo be unto the present Pharaohs of this house of bondage!

The scenery along the Nile presents many features reminding one strongly of some parts of India. The rice-fields and date-trees—the miserable mud hamlets—the ungainly buffalo lazily wallowing in the stream, to whose banks,

at the still, cool hour of eve, groups of dark though often handsome Arab girls are wont to repair for the purpose of replenishing those classically shaped urns, with—its *not* limpid waters—which they then so gracefully balance on their heads, whilst their single scanty blue garment serves barely to hide the symmetry of their well-formed shapes—or partly to veil large black lozenge-shaped eyes, which might rival the languishing orbs of those Naïads, frequenting the shores of the Ganges, the sacred Gunga of the Hindoo:—then again the manner of irrigation practised by the poor half-naked Fellahs, as they laboriously swing up the river water into their fields, in rudely-constructed vessels framed of basket-work—the very birds which pass in flocks over head* —all must powerfully tend to awaken long-buried associations in the minds of those who have ever dwelt in the far distant land of Hindostan.

* Amongst many others, the large grey king-fisher, and that small species of stork known in India as the white paddy bird, are likewise common to the banks of the Nile.

Egypt, like India, can also boast of its snake-charmers, its jugglers, and Nautch girls; and though the greater number of the latter —known here by the name of Almèh and Ghawazi—have lately been banished to Upper Egypt by an arbitrary decree of the Pasha,* a few still linger in their old haunts along the banks of the river, and strongly reminded us by many similar characteristics, of the frail Hindoo sisterhood.

The fishermen floating down the stream on their rudely-constructed rafts, supported by hollow gourds, also frequently attracted our attention, and furnished us moreover with means of adding a little variety to our repasts; whilst some of the finny tenants of the mighty stream would not, in flavour and delicacy, have disgraced the board of a city feast.

* Had this been with the idea of promoting a more moral feeling in the country, it would have been excusable; but it was on the part of Mehemet Ali a mere matter of finance, and vice has since then appeared in far more odious forms.

On the broad surface of the river floated innumerable vessels of every size, shape, and dimension, whose tall latine sails—when the body of the vessel was still concealed by the winding banks of the stream—often appeared like the elevated wings of some fabulous and enormous birds, slowly preparing to rise, as they skimmed along that sea of verdure which was alone perceptible under their swelling and gigantic forms.

On the evening of the fourth day, our eyes were feasted with perhaps one of the noblest sights in nature, as we beheld the deep red sun in a flood of molten fire, slowly setting behind those most stupendous monuments of former power, grandeur, and oppression: the eternal, the time-honoured Pyramids, whose summits the declining luminary still gilded, long after it had disappeared from our ken, and dipped into the boundless Lybian Desert beyond. Such a sight, to be duly appreciated *must* be witnessed, and any attempt at description would be a mere waste of words:

suffice it to say, that next morning going ashore at Boulac,* and mounting the ready-saddled donkeys awaiting at the landing-place, we soon trotted into El Musr—Kahirah el Kibir—the Great Cairo, "par excellence" *the* City of the East: and truly Oriental and original it did appear even to *our* gaze, although now long used to the gorgeous sights and splendid misery of the Levant.

After visiting Stamboul, Smyrna, Beyrout, and Alexandria, the traveller is astonished to find he has, till now, formed a very imperfect idea of what is really an Oriental city; and he here in vain looks for those traces of Europe, to which in the former places, he had been accustomed. The crowded bazaars thronged with every variety of Eastern costume—the dark narrow streets—the trellised windows—the veiled and phantom-like figures of the women, either gliding silently along, or overtopping the crowd, as half-astride, half in a sitting posture on donkeys, they are perched

* Boulac is the port of Cairo, where all the shipping congregate to discharge or take in their cargoes.

up on their high and peculiarly-fashioned saddles;—heavily-laden, ungainly camels—prancing Arabian steeds—sturdy water-carriers—all these objects, and thousands more besides, at once transport the stranger to the dreamy scenes of the Arabian Nights Entertainments, and make him fancy himself a moving actor in the very capital of Haroun El Raschid!

The only thing which met our view bearing an impress of the West, and recalled our European ideas, was a large white board stretching across one of the narrow streets, on which were legibly inscribed in ponderous Roman characters "Waghorn's Oriental Hotel:" nor were we sorry to find ourselves once more located amidst English comforts, with which the aforesaid caravanserai was most abundantly provided; and, after all our rough campaigning amongst Bedouin Arabs and the wild mountaineers of Syria, it must be confessed that at first we did not find ourselves perfectly at home, when seated once more like Christians at a good dinner, with knives, forks, plates, and glasses, and all other "appliances and means

to boot." Nor amidst the many other—to us now novel luxuries and attractions—must be omitted that of beholding our own fair countrywomen, in the shape of a couple of smart English chambermaids, who, together with a spruce waiter, composed part of the establishment of the "Oriental Hotel."

Once fairly located, my first move was to take measures in order to gain intelligence respecting the exiled Emirs and Sheikhs.* For this purpose I despatched a messenger to Thebes, and, whilst awaiting his return, lacked neither occupation nor amusement.

In my "lionizing" expeditions I was much indebted to the attentions of a little son of Galen, of the name of Bishop, to whom I had received a letter of introduction, who afforded every facility to meet my views, treated me with the greatest hospitality, and to whom I

* These were, besides the Emir Youssuf Shehab, many other Chieftains of Mount Lebanon, who, having been treacherously seized by Ibrahim Pasha, were by him shipped off to Alexandria, whence Mehemet Ali—that humane and philanthropic old gentleman!—had sent them to work in the gold mines of Sennaar.

now take this opportunity of returning my best thanks. Dr. Bishop had for some years been employed as a "Medico" in the Pasha's navy; but at last getting disgusted—like most other Englishmen who had ever entered his service—he left it as a bad job, and came to settle at Cairo, where, having assumed the Egyptian costume, taken to himself an Armenian wife, and adopted the native habits as well as dress, he managed to get on very well as a medical practitioner, and made himself very happy and comfortable.

The little gentleman was, as has been said, hospitable in the extreme: he often asked me to his house, and, although he would never allow me to have a peep at his better half, liberally allowed me the use of his horses and dogs—for he was a sportsman, had a tolerable stud, and a very good kennel of greyhounds, both of which, as will shortly be seen, we soon turned to good account.

But if the reader be himself a votary of Nimrod, and an admirer of that noble animal the horse, a few words respecting the Pasha's

stud at Shoubrah may not be unacceptable, particularly as it could boast of some of the purest Nedjdee blood, in ten or twelve stallions, brought, or rather forcibly taken from their birth-place: the Deserts of Arabia, by Ibrahim Pasha, during his Wahabee wars in the Hedjaz.

The object of this "stud,"—which, like most of the Pasha's other establishments, is under the superintendence of a Frenchman—was to produce a breed of horses capable of mounting his cavalry; and this purpose has been nearly effected by a cross between the common Egyptian mare, a very inferior animal, and the high-mettled Arabs just mentioned, by which a strong and serviceable race has been produced, apparently well adapted to the end in view.

This being the season when the horses are all turned out to "bersing," or grass; the superintendent, Monsieur ——, very civilly accompanied us to see what he called his *élèves*, all of whom were grazing in the large neighbouring fields of rich clover. We first inspected

the stallions, and nobler animals I never witnessed: they were mostly not only fixed at their pickets with both head and heel ropes, but many had also their fore-feet fastened together, and in some cases even another rope ran from the latter to their hind legs. Standing in this cramped posture, each mowed down the tall and succulent herbage within reach, and when that was exhausted he was removed further on. By this means not an inch of the pasture is wasted or lost, and the ground behind them is as well cleared as if a scythe had passed over its surface.

We could not help remarking on the apparent needless severity of their shackles, but Monsieur —— assured us they often were not *de trop*, and his assertion was speedily verified.

After examining at their pickets several of these splendid creatures, a most beautiful chestnut horse, by the extraordinary symmetry of his form, fixed our attention and elicited our unbounded admiration. The saïces, or grooms, were directed to lead him out, that we might see him to still greater advantage,

Monsieur —— assuring us that his *allure* equalled the beauty of his shape. Nor were we disappointed. This noble animal, of the usual Arab standard height, or about fourteen hands one inch, was of the brightest chestnut, and realized all the *beau ideal* of Job's war-horse. As, led by a couple of saïces, he was proudly pacing up and down before us, a sudden commotion aroused our attention. It proved to be one of the horses lent to us for the occasion by Abbas Pasha, (the grandson of Mehemet Ali and the Governor of Cairo,) which had escaped from the hands of the saïce, and was now—with all its splendid accoutrements of gold and crimson—wildly careering to and fro, amidst the ranks of the till now, quiet and grazing troop. But the effect of this invasion on their domains was most sudden and instantaneous: some broke from their pickets, others madly pawed up the ground, whilst their neighing and screeches of battle fell confusedly on the ear, intermingled with the clamour and cries of the alarmed and busy saïces.

However, our attention was too strongly rivetted on the beautiful creature before us to heed the surrounding turmoil: his pure Arab blood was now boiling; and as, with distended nostril, glancing eye, and every vein distinctly marked on his silken skin, he madly reared and struggled to get free from the panting grooms, who with the utmost difficulty held him, our French friend, Monsieur ——, though much annoyed at what had happened, could not help stopping short as he issued his orders, and in the height of his admiration, pointing out new beauties as they successively appeared. He at last became as eloquent as his countryman in *Henry the Fifth*, when in praise of his steed he says, "ça, ha! he bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hairs; *le cheval volant*, the Pegasus *qui a les narines de feu!*" and verily "El Burg" (Lightning)—for so was he appropriately called—seemed "pure air and fire; the dull elements of earth and water never appeared in him; he was the prince of palfreys; his neigh

was like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforced homage."

It was not till after considerable time and difficulty that the fugitive was secured, and order restored,—fortunately without any accident; and having inspected the male part of the establishment, we walked to some distant fields, where were likewise picketed the brood mares, to the number of, I think, a couple of hundred. On our way thither, Monsieur —— was extremely obliging and communicative, and gave us the fullest details as to the management of the "haras," which he said would, he had no doubt, eventually answer every expectation. Finding me an amateur in horse-flesh, he entered largely and with *gusto* on the subject. Amongst other things, I happened to mention the Indian system of fattening horses on chopped sheep's head, and was not a little surprised when he said that he could the more easily credit it, as to his personal knowledge the Arabs of the Hedjaz often feed their horses on the dried flesh of the camel, as well as its milk; and that in some of the districts along

the coast, when barley was scarce, even dried fish was used for them as an article of food! It would thus appear that this noble animal, like man, can adapt his stomach to every substance, and his nature to every climate, from the frozen steppes of Tartary to the scorching Deserts of Arabia—from sweet smelling hay to stinking fish!

We found the mares—which were entirely country-bred—animals of a most inferior description and size, yet—with such noble sires—their progeny was far from bad, and answered somewhat in appearance to our common English hackney; but Monsieur —— entertained the most sanguine hopes that great improvements as to the breed would take place in a few generations, when the pure Arab blood should in some measure have superseded the dunghill qualities and appearance which mark the Fellah horse, and are the general characteristics of the species, when indigenous—as in the present case—to the fat pastures of a low, rich, or swampy soil.

Having inspected all the horses at grass,

including the colts, we next visited the stables and infirmary, the internal arrangements of which did great credit to Monsieur ——'s skill and judgment; when, after thanking him for all his civility and attention, we mounted our horses and cantered back to Cairo, under the shade of those fine sycamore trees* bordering the long avenue which leads to the Palace of Shoubrah.'

Our friend Dr. Bishop next took us to see—what betokened an approach to Central Africa with all its monsters—a fine double-horned rhinoceros, which had been lately sent to the Pasha from one of the tributary Princes of Sennaar. With the exception of being thus doubly-armed, it varied not in appearance from the specimen exhibited at the *Jardin des Plantes*, or the Zoological Gardens: but what interested us much more, was the exhibition of the snake charmers, which we shall in a few words attempt to describe.

* These trees, though always called by travellers the "Sycamore," are in truth a species of the "Ficus Indicus," or Indian Banyan.

"The Psylli were an Afric clan
Of magic power possess'd;
Fierce snakes of enmity to man
They could with ease divest:"

and as the swarthy, sunburnt, and savage-looking being, in his soiled and ragged costume, appeared before us with his baskets full of the crawling reptiles, we thought him not an unapt representative of one of that "magic clan" with which his profession appeared to identify him.

The exhibitions of this worthy, with his numerous family of serpents and scorpions which he had collected from the neighbouring Desert, strongly recalled to mind the Indian "Samp wallahs,* with this addition—that having made them perform certain evolutions for the amusement of the company, he concluded the entertainment by next devouring alive one of his pupils. As a preliminary to this disgusting operation, the ophiophagus drew out one of the largest of his snakes, when

* For a full description of the Indian Snake Catchers, *vide* Chap. vi., vol. ii. of the author's "Scenes and Sports in Foreign Lands."

having bared his arms and grasped him firmly by the body in both hands, he appeared to work himself into a state of frenzy, to prepare for the revolting scene about to take place: his eyes glared, his countenance was contorted; and grinning a ghastly smile, which shewed to advantage a formidable range of white sharp tushes, he suddenly seized the reptile with his teeth, behind the head, tore the skin half way down its writhing body, out of which biting several large morsels, he greedily swallowed them, after grinding well betwixt his powerful masticators the quivering flesh, mixed with blood, bones, and vitals. The greater part of the serpent thus rapidly disappeared, as would, no doubt, soon have done the entire animal, had we not in uncontrollable disgust, turned away from the horrible performance.

We shortly afterwards had a sight of the great Maugrabin or Western Magician, so often mentioned by travellers, and at the expense of some four or five dollars, became perfectly convinced that his spells and incantations, notwithstanding what has been averred to the

contrary, are as complete humbug as those of any other professional charlatan.

Having now beheld nearly all the sights of Cairo, as well as visited the great Pyramids—those resting-places of old Cheops and Cepherenus—I proposed to my friend the Doctor to make an excursion of a few days to the Pyramids of Saccarah and Dashour; and as he had said foxes and jackals abounded there on the confines of the Desert, it was agreed that we should take with us his greyhounds, with the chance of having a gallop. Not expecting, however, to find much accommodation either for man or horse at places intended alone for the residence of the dead, we thought it prudent to lay in a stock of liquor and eatables, which being next day snugly packed in the neat little baskets or rather boxes, made of the stalk of the date leaf,* were—together with

* The date-tree here—as in most other countries where it grows—is employed for a variety of purposes; and its fruit constitutes at certain periods of the year, the chief food of the inhabitants, who have not yet apparently acquired the knowledge, so general in India, that

sundry small carpets and blankets (for at night it was extremely cold)—placed the following morning, on the backs of a couple of donkeys, and despatched to Saccarah; ourselves following shortly after.

Three fine English greyhounds and a non-descript animal, which my friend called a native of Abyssinia, constituted our pack. The latter strongly reminded me—with its scanty coat, powerful limbs, and long muzzle—of those dogs so well known in India by the name of Polygars. I observed something in this animal's appearance which led me strongly to suspect it had more in it than was ever "dreamt of in our philosophy;" nor did I prove mistaken in these conjectures.

After ferrying across the Nile at the island of Rhodah, we landed at Ghizeh,—the scene of the defeat of the Mamelukes by the French,—

a pleasing and sometimes intoxicating beverage may be extracted from its trunk. The little boxes alluded to, which resemble cages, are also made use of as seats in the different "caffanets," or coffee-shops, which are met with in every village.

and leaving the great Pyramids on our right, kept for a considerable distance in a southerly direction, along the fertile belt of cultivation intervening between the river and the Desert; which latter we at last entered close to those crumbling—though still gigantic masses—called the Pyramids of Dashour. Scarcely had we quitted the rich pastures of the plain, and embarked on the ocean of barrenness before us—an ocean so boundless that even imagination is lost in its magnitude—when, quietly stealing towards one of the Pyramids, we beheld, amidst the broken sandy undulations of the Desert, that most grateful of sights to the eye of a sportsman—a fine large fox.

Immediately after laying on the dogs, I made towards the great Pyramids, which, constructed for monarchs, were now the abode of the "jackal and hyæna," and where, it was more than probable, our friend Reynard had also his barrack-room. He made a bold and dashing effort to gain his quarters, but I succeeded in heading him; and, on turning, he tried for the Pyramids of Saccarah, across

a fine open space of hard gravelly sand, the dogs well laid on, and kept to their work by the little Doctor and myself, who cheered them merrily forward. At first, one of the English greyhounds took the lead in gallant style, and the odds appeared much in favour of British blood; but as the run was prolonged, he began, under the broiling sun—whose heat was doubly increased by the glare of the surrounding sands—to shew evident symptoms of distress; and the Abyssinian, who had latterly come up, and been hanging close on his flank, now got a-head, the other dogs being nowhere, and so completely *done* as to be entirely thrown out, and in the rear of the horses.

The ground, which had hitherto been tolerably good—hard sand and gravel—now got rather *unpleasant*, as amidst abrupt falls—the excavated foundations of what had probably, at some remote period, been the noble structures of the great Memphis—we would suddenly gallop on the very brink of the deep shafts or wells leading to the mummy-pits below, whilst in many places—after, with

difficulty, in our headlong course, steering clear of those dangerous pitfalls—the earth sounded so thin and hollow under our horses' hoofs, as to lead to the apprehension of its giving way beneath their weight, and precipitating us without further introduction, amidst those goodly assemblies below, whose members for so many centuries have quietly lain embalmed and sleeping in their mephitic garments. Luckily for the nerves of its votaries, the chase, like the battle-field, gives little time for reflection, which, were it indulged in, would, in many cases, no doubt greatly detract from the pleasures of a victory, or the satisfaction of capturing a brush!

Moralizing is always an after-piece to action, nor had we time thus to indulge, till following the dogs over a swelling bank of sand, which, for a moment, had hid them from our sight, we rattled at a fearful pace down the steep side of the opposite declivity, and then caught a glimpse of the two greyhounds as they lay panting at the entrance of a recently-opened mummy-pit, in which Reynard

had evidently taken refuge, with the bad taste of thus preferring the converse of the dead to the society of the living!

For some time previously I had observed that the little Doctor's horse appeared, in the excitement of the chase, to carry his rider rather faster than was agreeable to the latter, more especially as the state saddle of crimson velvet, apparently unaccustomed to such violent exertions, seemed to sit very uneasily, particularly on any sudden ascent, where it shewed, by a decided retrograde movement, a strong disposition to part company with its support; moreover, the powerful Mameluke curb in his horse's mouth was evidently ill adapted to the strong pull necessary to sustain him in the sudden and abrupt falls of the rough and broken ground we had latterly been scouring across. I, with considerable difficulty, pulled up in front of the wide chasm, at whose mouth lay the gasping hounds; but the Doctor, in the steep descent, had lost all command of his steed. In trying suddenly, and with violence, to arrest its

course, he lost his balance, the saddle turned round, and my poor friend was precipitated to the ground into a mass of mouldering skulls, arms, and legs, and heaps of half pulverized mummy-wrappers, where, amidst the clouds of dust raised by his fall, he lay nearly lost from view, and all but smothered.

Considering this a tolerable *finale* to the day's sport,—after succeeding in getting him again mounted,—we jogged back to a small Fellah village amidst a grove of noble date-trees, on part of that site, where at one time, stood probably the city of the Pharaohs. We here found our saïces and commissariat, and were soon comfortably established in the best mud-hut the place afforded—to wit, the house of the Sheikh El Bellud; who, it appears, was an old antiquarian acquaintance of the Doctor.*

At this place we spent two or three days very

* The Arabs in the neighbourhood of the Pyramids now make a regular trade of antiquities, which they dispose of to the numerous travellers attracted hither by the overland passage from India.

pleasantly; and although now in a region which, in all ages, has been famed as the cradle of monsters, where it is proverbially said that—

> "O'er the dry sand the fell hyæna prowls,
> The leopard hisses, and the panther growls;"

still we were not fated to encounter any such foes; and our exploits were confined to a few gallops after foxes and jackals, which we generally found in the neighbourhood of the Pyramids—to frightening the hares we turned out of the mimosa thickets bordering the Desert—and to occasionally breathing, though without effect, both dogs and horses after the gazelles, we sometimes met with during our more distant excursions into the Desert, and which invariably went off as on the wings of the wind, disappearing amidst its boundless sands, and leaving us to retrace our homeward steps in weariness and disappointment.

So passed our mornings and evenings, and the intervening hours were spent in exploring the tombs, mummy-pits, and excavations in the neighbourhood; but these light pages being ill adapted to the depths of antiquarian re-

search, a description will elsewhere be given of our labours in those learned pursuits.

When we had finished all our provisions and liquor; fagged both horses and dogs; got ourselves pretty well sun-burnt, tanned, and tired, we cut the Lybian Desert, and returned to Cairo, where intelligence from Upper Egypt shortly arrived, which caused my immediate departure.

The exiled Chiefs of Mount Lebanon, released from bondage, were already on their return from the remote regions of Kordofan; but, alas, the object of my research: the Emir Youssuf Solyman Shehab, having fallen a victim to sickness, deferred hope, and a deadly climate, was no more. His soul had taken flight to higher and happier regions; and I was left to lament so unexpected an occurrence, which, dashing hope and expectation to the ground, left in my grasp nought save the fragments of many a half-formed plan, and future wild and visionary scheme.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALEXANDRIA.—A FIRST OF SEPTEMBER IN THE PLAINS OF LOWER EGYPT.

Alexandria the cradle of the Plague—Its ruins—Pompey's pillar, and Cleopatra's Needles—The Necropolis—The Plague and Khumseen winds—Plains of Ramlah—Projected Expedition—Mr. Snow—A disappointment—The start—Voyage on the Mahmoudieh Canal—The mirage of the Desert—Songs of the crew—Mr. Giorgio Adib—Our Sporting costumes—The heroic Snow—A ferocious charger—The Ḍubbah—Rice fields—Fencing in Egypt—A stopper—Snow's mishap—The Hālouf afoot—Beaters brought to a standstill—Breaking cover—The pursuit—A spill—Swimming a canal—No kill.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALEXANDRIA.—HOG-HUNTING IN THE PLAINS OF LOWER EGYPT.

"The exiled spirit sighing roves,
And now hangs listening to the doves
In warm Rosetta's Vale—now loves
To watch the moonlight on the wings
Of *bright flamingoes*, as they break
The calm of Mæreotis' Lake."

LALLAH ROOKH.

ALEXANDRIA has oft and aptly been termed the cradle of Pestilence—the birth-place of the fell and sweeping Plague; and whoever wanders over the desolate barren sands in its neighbourhood, would fancy the dread demon had with a deadly blast from his poisoned breath, not only swept off every being en-

dowed with life, but had likewise scorched up and blighted all other productions of a fair and all-bountiful Nature. Desolation itself appears here doubly desolate. The very ruins, thickly scattered o'er this dreary scene, bear the impress of a heavier hand than that alone of time and age; and as the stranger mournfully wanders above heaps of crumbling pottery and pulverized brick, his eye in vain searches for any of those nobler relics which recall images of bygone splendour and renown, hallowing by their shade the ground trodden by former greatness! In roaming over the Colisæum, the Acropolis, the Troad, Balbec, or Palmyra, —Memory, though saddened at the sight, reposes with mournful pleasure on a fallen column—a ruined arch—a broken pedestal; which, forming links between the present and the past, are lasting mementoes over which her sister Meditation thoughtfully leans, though she drop a tear in so doing.

Such is the neighbourhood of Alexandria—such the surrounding waste, where—save Pompey's Pillar and the Needles of Cleopatra—

not one stone rests on another, to afford an abode for even the jackal or hyæna—not a shaft or pedestal remains standing, where the owl or vulture may find a resting-place! This dreary solitude affords a strong contrast to the life and bustle of the city itself—a city now fast rising from its long slumbering ruins, and again becoming, after the lapse of centuries, the mart of commerce and high road of communication between the East and the West. Its port, now bristling with a "forestry of masts"—its busy and crowded streets—the motley character of its population; people of every nation of the earth appearing to be here congregated—its rising edifices—all now present a very different appearance from what it exhibited some very few years back.

Issuing through the western gate from amidst all this scene of industry, bustle, and commerce, you appear at once transported into the sandy barrenness of the Lybian Desert, as, treading over that city of the dead: the ancient Necropolis, with its excavated tombs and catacombs, and wending along the shallow,

though wide expanse of Lake Mæreotis,* the traveller finds nought on which to rest the eye save a boundless expanse of burning sands, or the glare of a vertical sun on this large sheet of salt water — of, however, so little depth, that, far as the sight can range, numerous flocks of brilliant flamingoes may be seen wading through its waters in search of their accustomed prey. To the southward the town is bounded by the above Lake, or inundation, along whose banks run the Mahmoudieh Canal: here some slight traces of verdure may be met with, and on the narrow strip of green cultivation irrigated by its waters are found the country-houses of the numerous European merchants established in Alexandria.

It was in this green little oasis that stood the hospitable mansion of my friend Tibaldi, who, with his amiable lady, united invariably

* This Lake, or rather inundation, was formed by General Hutchinson in 1801, who, cutting through the embankment of the Canal, allowed the waters of Lake Maadie to spread over that large extent of country which forms the present Lake Mæreotis.

in shewing every kindness and attention to all travellers and fellow-countrymen wandering in this far distant land; and often in the cool vine-covered and banana-shaded bowers of this delightful spot, have I taken refuge, whilst raged the smothering Khumseen wind: the dreaded Simoom of the Desert, or when

> "The Demon of the Plague did cast
> From his hot wing a deadlier blast,
> More mortal far than ever came
> From the red Desert's sands of flame!"

and spread terror and desolation through the then deserted and abandoned streets of Alexandria!

Oft here—as in Boccaccio's garden—would a party assemble and while away the heavy hours of pestilence and dread. Oft from his portal would we mount our gallant steeds, and scour the Desert towards Aboukir, over the deep, sandy, date-covered Plains of Ramlah, or the stony heights of Cæsar's camp: those scenes of British prowess, that last battle-field of the gallant Abercrombie! and many is the

fox, jackal, and wild dog that we have caused to run for their lives in these our mad, Mazeppa-like expeditions!*

Even the dullest and most sombre periods

* These desert and sandy plains abound likewise with a small animal called the "jaboa," about the size of a rat, but possessing most of the characteristics of the kangaroo. By some writers this little creature is supposed to be the *saphan* of Scripture, commonly translated as the "coney." Again, it is supposed that the Hebrew Legislator alluded to the jaboa when he said: "Whatsoever goeth upon its *paws*, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you." (Lev. xi. 27.) And although the coney or rabbit, which is also interdicted as unclean at verse 5 of the same chapter, may be said to go occasionally upon its (hind?) "paws," still the jaboa not only sometimes feeds in that position, but, from the peculiar shortness of its fore-legs, it moves by a succession of leaps and jumps; and when stopping, brings its feet close under its belly, resting on the juncture of the leg. Neither during my residence in Syria and Egypt did I ever behold a rabbit, nor am I aware of their existence in those countries. Again, the prophet Isaiah, in making mention of the idolatrous habits of his countrymen, notices the eating of "swine's flesh" and the abomination of the *mouse*, which, possessing some of the attributes of the jaboa, may have been confounded with the latter.

of life are occasionally irradiated by a bright stream of sunshine; and that heavy cloud in our existence—a long residence at the city of the Ptolomie —was thus often broken and illumined by those lightning courses over the Desert, in the company of a few light-hearted and joyous spirits, with whom dull care was cast aside like a falcon from its jesses, and given to the winds of Heaven—even as the long, flowing manes of our fiery and foaming Arab steeds.

Thanks to the sporting efforts of my aforesaid hospitable friend, did we manage pretty well to kill time, though it must be confessed little besides, till one day the unusual sight of a wild boar's head at his well-furnished table, suggested the idea of a hog-hunting expedition a few miles to the eastward—along the banks of the Mahmoudieh Canal, where this "hălouf"* (wild boar) was said to have been found.

* "Hălouf" is the Arabic for wild hog—the domestic animal of the same species being, in that language, termed a "Khunzeer."

Accordingly spearheads were fashioned, shafts procured for the same, a comfortable kunjah was hired, and a jolly party, consisting of G—— T——, myself, and some officers of H. M. steamer Medea, having fixed the period, laid in a good stock of eatables and liquor, and consigned the same to the care of Mr. Snow—our horses were sent on with their saïces, and we decided on following them per Canal the next day.—But it is now time to introduce a character who in the following pages will cut a most conspicuous sporting figure—the above-named worthy, Mr. Snow.

Born near the sources of the "Giant Nile," in the remote regions of Kordofan, Mirjan,—surnamed (*lucus à non lucedi*) from his ebony complexion "Snow,"—at an early age found his way into the slave-market of Alexandria, where he had many years since been purchased by an English resident at that place, who gave him his freedom, and in whose family he ever since resided. However, his patron having occasion to leave Egypt and

proceed for a few months to England, I promised, until his return, to take charge of this jetty excrescence of Ethiopia.

In the remote interior of Africa, on reaching the confines of Abyssinia, the Negro race appears, both in shape and features, to undergo a sudden improvement, to lose many of what are considered its distinctive and characteristic qualities; and although the ebony hue still prevails, yet the low forehead, that mis-shaped protuberance miscalled a nose, and large pouting lips, make way for a much more regular outline of countenance, approaching in many respects to that of the European; and some of the Abyssinian slave girls, daily disposed of in the markets of El Musr, might often vie in appearance with the dark, though handsome maidens of Hindostan, with their graceful forms and classic features.

But Mr. Snow possessed none of these deceptive marks of exception: he was a true "Nigger" every inch of him, and moreover one of the ugliest dogs of that ill-favoured race. His age might have been about twenty;

he stood nearly six feet without his "paposhes;" his long, ungainly form was sustained on a pair of drumsticks, each describing in its outward curve the true semicircular line of grace and beauty, and well adapted by their shape and length to form the ribs of a moderately-sized vessel: his naturally obscure charms had moreover been heightened by the accidental loss of two front teeth: but withal Mr. Snow was a trump; and, although from his youth, spoiled and petted by a kind and indulgent master, he nevertheless retained many sterling qualities, and proved himself a good, faithful, and honest servant.

To Mr. Snow was therefore consigned the commissariat department, together with all the interior arrangements of the voyage, which was to extend some thirty or forty miles up the Canal; and he had just announced that everything was ready for a start, when—oh! glorious uncertainty of human affairs!—we received the astounding intelligence that he whom we had reckoned on as being the life and soul of our embryo party, the jovial,

laughter-loving Tibaldi, was prevented by pressing affairs from being able to join us. Evils never come alone in this sublunary world. Scarcely had we recovered from so severe a blow, when a note came from the Medea, saying that a screw had somehow or other got loose, (these confounded steamers are always getting out of order!) and the short and long of it was, that we were also disappointed of the company of our naval friends, who, in the—to them—novel occupation of harpooning pigs, had, in anticipation, promised themselves much fun, and to the rest of the party no little amusement.

These heavy inflictions falling on us in such quick and rapid succession had nearly annihilated the hog-hunting party in its very cradle; however, like infant Hercules and the serpents—so did we manfully strive with, and overcome every impending difficulty. Snow looked aghast; my companion put down in silence his "gem-adorn'd chibouque," and assumed the face of resignation; whilst I, from amidst a cloud of aromatic vapour which lent

its mystic aid to my inspired words, heroically exclaimed, that, although doubtless great and afflicting as was the loss we had sustained, still,—far from deterring us from so noble an undertaking,—it should act as an additional stimulus to our exertions; and that the fewer the numbers engaged, the greater would be the glory falling to their share, in bringing off those bloody trophies which we already looked upon as our own! I therefore moved, that, though at present under less auspicious circumstances than before, the expedition should nevertheless take place; and to this, my sporting friend Smith willingly acceded. The motion was approved of by Mr. Snow: therefore, mounting our "himars,"* and jogging along in the wake of that worthy son of Erebus, we soon reached the bank of the Canal and embarked on board our kunjah.

To the quiet, easy-going mortal, who prefers

* Donkeys,—the general mode of conveyance at Alexandria, where numbers of these animals are always standing ready-saddled in the streets, with their clamorous attendants, the "donkey-boys," in waiting.

indolence and ease to the fatigue of active exertions, there cannot be a more delightful plan of travelling than this aquatic mode of conveyance. Surrounded by every comfort, in a well-fitted apartment, the traveller reclines, pipe in hand (for nothing is here done without the chibouque) on his luxurious ottoman, whence he can survey all the passing scenery which flits indistinctly before his sleepy, half-closed eyes. Should the wind fail, or prove adverse, the ready crew leap ashore and track along his floating habitation, which—when favoured by a propitious breeze—is propelled rapidly through the smooth waters by the help of a ponderous latine sail, forming in my opinion the only drawback to this quiet, dreamy system of progression; for the breeze being often very faint, and moreover in many places interrupted by the high banks, this sail is made of such a disproportioned height and size, as frequently to endanger the safety of the boat, whenever a stronger puff unexpectedly meets it; and many accidents frequently by this

means occur, both on the Mahmoudieh Canal, and on the broad surface of the Nile.

It was the last day of August when my above-mentioned friend and myself—braving the terrors of the deep—embarked on this venturous voyage of sporting discovery. The burning heats of the two last months had nearly prostrated the Plague Demon, and dried up his poisoned breath. Since the latter end of June, his dread influence had gradually decreased; and the swelling waters of the Nile, together with strong northerly breezes, were now beginning to cool the atmosphere and to render the climate more bearable. Our crew, after towing the boat past the first winding of the Canal, at last brought the wind right abaft, and jumping on board, lost no time in hoisting the huge latine sail, under whose shade they now gladly rested from their wearying task.

Pipes were lit, the tale went round, and the boat-song gladly cheered us in our quiet progress, Mr. Snow frequently lending his Stentorian lungs to increase the effect of the chorus.

We thus merrily glided over the smooth waters, passing constantly the numerous and variously-loaded barges plying like ourselves on the Canal;—some carrying troops, others deeply laden with the Pasha's corn—some with vegetables and various produce of the country, with which they were proceeding to the markets of Iskenderia (Alexandria). Oft, light caïque-built gondolas would flit like meteors past, in the wake of foaming steeds, which, galloping along the banks, dragged them at this pace through the disturbed and bubbling waters; whilst, like a Triton with his sea-shell,—standing on the bows and armed with a long speaking trumpet,—was always to be seen a man, who in brazen tones, warned the heavier barges of his approach, in order that they might get out of the way, and avoid the long and well-stretched towing-line.

The first part of the voyage lay between an embankment, separating us from the wide extent of Lake Mæreotis on the one hand, whilst on the other, lay that vast tract of salt sandy desert running to Aboukir and Lake

Etcho, and on which might be seen in every shape and variety, the flitting and illusive forms and colours of the mirage.*

We next gradually entered a belt of rich verdure widely extending on each side, on which the eye—long scorched and wearied by the painful glare of burning sands and leafless wastes—now gladly dilated, as it rested on the boundless and verdant sea of cultivation which in every direction seemed here to encircle the horizon.

Amidst all these pleasing sights, time passed so heedlessly away, that we were surprised —on receiving a summons from Mr. Snow —to find that the shades of evening had imperceptibly crept upon us, and that, moreover, dinner awaited our presence in the interior cabin.

* No one not having witnessed this extraordinary phenomenon, can form an idea of the wonderfully deceptive powers of the mirage; groups of date-trees, verdant banks, and sheets of clear water, appear before the traveller in such tangible shapes, that their identity could be sworn to, and it is long ere he can be convinced that they are mere vain and empty shadows.

On rising from table, we found the tranquil beauties of the scene greatly enhanced by a bright moon; whilst, wrapped up in our boat-cloaks, we took our chibouques on deck, and lay listening to the boat-song of the old Reis, who, perched up aloft, on the *roof* of our ark, kept steering her on her course, whilst drawling out interminable stanzas, in which he was ever and anon joined in chorus by the listening crew. We thus passed several hours in a most happy state of dreamy existence, and it was near midnight ere we moored at the place of our destination—the small village of Abou-el-Kader, near which, was to be the scene of our future operations.

Mehemet Ali is in the habit of farming out portions of his land (containing a certain number of villages) to the several European residents at Alexandria; and that of Abou-el-Kader having been taken on these terms by Mr. Giorgio Adib, the Dragoman to the English Consulate, he had written to his

agent residing on the spot, to prepare everything for our accommodation; so that next morning, on rising betimes, we found all "appliances and means to boot" to assist us in our meditated warfare against the bristly race. Beaters were in readiness, some mounted Bedouins in attendance to act as guides, and there was even a steed at the disposal of Mr. Snow.

But ere starting, we *must* give a sketch of as original a party of sportsmen as ever, full of hope and spirits, entered on a bright first of September; for it was that very day—so sacred in the annals of the chase—which witnessed our "meet" on the banks of the Mahmoudieh Canal.

It may, however, be necessary to premise—as a justification for the little success which attended our subsequent operations, and for the very slight crop of laurels we gathered on the occasion—that our stud was, to say the best of it, composed of very indifferent nags. Not a single specimen of Arab blood could we

muster in the whole party. I was mounted on a large black Dongola horse,* showy and full of courage, but failing in those essential points of speed and bottom. Not having any sporting apparel at hand, I contented myself with the garb of innocence—pure virgin white. White jacket and waistcoat, also "prolongators" of the same, composed—with a long tough and heavy ashen spear—my unpretending costume.†

My friend Smith, with a red "tarboush" on his head,‡ moreover astonished the Natives by the sight of tops and leathers; probably the first of that race doomed to carry away marks of Egypt's dark and fertile loam.

* A few of these horses come from the interior of Africa, and though far inferior to the Arabs, they are considerably better than the "Fellah" horse.

† To account to the experienced hog-hunter for such an anomaly as a shaft made of ash-wood, it may be necessary to state that the author in vain attempted to procure at Alexandria, the light though tough Bamboo so generally used for this purpose in India.

‡ The tarboush is synonymous with the red fez, the head-dress in common wear with the Natives.

The Bedouins—whose camp was pitched on the borders of the Barrieh or Desert—headed by the venerable Sheikh Subbrah, although not boasting of superior cattle to ourselves, added greatly to the picturesque effect of the scene; and with their large white turbans and flowing abbas or cloaks, their long-barrelled firelocks, high-seated saddles, and huge shovel-shaped iron stirrups, gave a truly wild and Oriental appearance to our motley group.

But the "pink" of sporting fashion on this momentous occasion—the "beau ideal" of a gay Forest Ranger—was the heroic Snow. He had secured a horse made use of from time immemorial by Mr. Giorgio Adib, to go quietly round his estate during certain periodical visits at Abou-el-Kader. Ferocity at first sight might have been imagined the principal characteristic of this proud animal—judging from the unmeasured length of tusk wherewith he was provided—and which would not have disgraced the most venerable leader of the bristly herds on whom we were now about to wage war. But this impression, if at first sight

admitted on such strong grounds, immediately vanished, when ample testimony became manifest of a meek and religious disposition, on glancing at his supporters,—the knee-caps being considerably worn away and injured, by the most persevering and repeated genuflections, evidently proving him much addicted to saying his prayers. Mr. Snow, in all the pride of conscious youth and beauty, a smile of unconcealed delight stretching his open countenance from ear to ear; his ebony face shining in the morning sun, and his white garments fluttering in the breeze, proudly grasped a spear, and vaulted into the high-peaked saddle on the back of this noble Pegasus.

The plains of Lower Egypt, though at first sight presenting the most level, unbroken appearance, occasionally offer obstacles which might puzzle even a well-mounted Leicestershire man, who, though he would in vain search for a single ox-fence, five-barred gate, or bullfinch hedge, might occasionally be brought to a stand-still by a dyke—too broad to clear at a leap—of stagnant water soaking

deeply into a rich, black, and loamy soil; by a continuous range of soft, marshy rice-fields, or (more particularly at this season, when the land is in many places overflown with the swollen waters of the Nile) by that most impassable and most provoking of all "stoppers," a dark, deep, and treacherous bog.

After a short consultation with the Sheikh, we determined to strike inland, and, crossing a part of the Desert Barrieh, reached some extensive fields of dourah, or Indian corn. The beaters, however, appeared to hesitate on entering amidst its tall and waving stalks, and Mr. Snow said, that although wild hog frequently harboured there, a "dubbah" had been seen of late, and that they were afraid to encounter it by going into "covert."

"And pray," asked I, "what may a dubbah be?"

"One elephant, Sir," said Snow, with the greatest assurance. This was, as I conceived, rather too much of a good joke, and I threatened to break my spear-shaft over his shoulders for such a barefaced attempt at humbug;

but it appeared he was innocent of any design of the kind, and that what he called an elephant was meant for neither more nor less than an ounce, or panther, or probably only a tiger-cat.

But we were not particular; and had all the sacred cats of Memphis been turned adrift before us, it is probable they would have had to run for their lives; and both Smith and myself agreeing that we might as well blood our spears with one of the feline species as on the unclean beast, we made a most diligent research through the dourah; but without avail.

The beaters next took us a few miles further, to a large tract of rice-fields on the borders of the Barrieh, where they assured us we might make certain of a find; and having already lost a considerable time with the "dubbah," we proceeded to business without delay, and soon discovered ourselves amidst the most serious obstacles to our forward progress—a rich well-irrigated land, thickly intersected with wet, muddy ditches, the diffi-

culty of crossing which was greatly increased by the soft nature of their banks. After getting over several of these impediments without accident, we at last came to one broader and deeper than the rest. Our Bedouins did not look comfortable; a slight dash of the lily flitted like a moonbeam over Snow's radiant countenance; and if the truth *must* be told, I did not myself half like the appearance of the dark engulfing waters of the gaping "Avernus" before us.

But Smith was a bold fellow. Taking his horse back a few yards, and trying to get him into something resembling a canter over the soft and sinking soil, "Here goes!" cried he, as he screwed him up to the brink, giving him at the same time his head, and dashing both rowels into his heaving flanks; and he *did* go,—but it was head foremost into the dark pool beneath.

The horse, as I had easily foreseen, from want of sufficient impetus, leaped short, and after floundering for some time in the drain, succeeded in scrambling up the opposite bank,

without further mischief than effecting a sad alteration in the appearance of his rider's "tops" and "leathers."

We all laughed heartily. Smith himself enjoying the joke as much as the rest, and Mr. Snow was in raptures. "You d—d black rascal!" exclaimed Smith, "I'll pay you off for this. Pray, Colonel, send the fellow over to this side of the water," he added, addressing himself to me. I took the hint, and to Mr. Snow's dismay, placing myself in rear of his Rosinante, began to belabour both man and horse with the butt end of my spear. Snow, in the attitude of despair, was earnestly expostulating,—on what he no doubt considered the brink of destruction,—when, determined to try sharper means of persuasion, I gently inserted a few lines of the spear-head into the nether parts of his, till now, passive and unwilling steed. This unexpected dose had such an effect, that the animal, making a sudden bound, would have cleared the ditch in splendid style, had not the rider—as he was in the act of lodging on the opposite bank—suddenly

checked him by a pull on the severe Mameluke bit, which instantly drew him backwards, and next instant the dark muddy waters sullenly closed over both man and horse; poor Snow being undermost of the two at the moment of their mysterious disappearance.

However, ere we had time to dismount and go to his assistance, like a huge black grampus, puffing, blowing, and spitting the thick pea-soup-like liquid out of his wide mouth, his ugly face appeared above a surface almost as dark as himself. He managed to get disengaged from the high Moorish saddle and trappings, scrambled out in a most woful plight, and succeeded—after some trouble—in also dragging up the bank his snorting and floundering steed. The old Sheikh, who did not apparently like this sort of fun, had very sagely sought a more practicable spot to cross over; and deeming prudence in this instance the better part of valour, I followed his example, and soon joined my companions, not a little proud of the still unblemished state of my garments; but *my* turn was soon to come.

After traversing a few more rice-fields, and approaching the Barrieh, we began to despair of a find, when the suddenly-increased clamour and rapid motions of the beaters, announced something to be on foot; and presently above the waving rice—like the dark forms of the monsters of the deep, seen at intervals over the ripples of a summer sea—the well-known outline of an old acquaintance was at first dimly viewed, and then—as the rustling herbage opened on its passage, and occasionally shewed a portion of the black moving mass above even its highest undulating tops—no doubt remained on my mind of its being a boar, and one of the first magnitude; but I proved mistaken in the former, though correct in the latter conjecture.

Pistol-shots were discharged by our beaters, the shouts increased, and to the cries of El Hălouf! El Hălouf! (the wild boar! the wild boar!) the whole of our myrmidons—now joined by numbers of Fellahs from the adjoining fields—pressed on rapidly in pursuit, when suddenly they were all brought to a

stand-still, and shewed evident symptoms of trepidation and dismay.

The "hālouf," pursued through the cultivation to the borders of the Barrieh, now shewed no disposition to take to the open country, which, in a most inviting manner, stretched for a couple of miles before him; but, turning fiercely round, stood resolutely at bay, and appeared to bid defiance to the surrounding host, not one of whom dared to approach him; whilst the horsemen remained on the outside of the rice-fields, encouraging the beaters to drive him out of covert, and prepared to blood their glittering arms as soon as he should step on *terra firma*.

His appearance was, however, too formidable for the nerves of the timid Fellahs, and we remained some time thus in suspense, till at last, seeing an Arab coming across the fields with a long rusty firelock, and fearing some mischief might be done which would have spoiled our anticipated gallop, I ordered up the cavalry; which, making a circuit, entered the rice-fields, and advanced in

front of the then encouraged and reassured beaters.

Piggy, probably thinking we were coming it "too strong," with a most musical grunt now burst through the tall herbage, and instantly was bounding over the wide level plain, which, for the distance of a couple of miles continued unbroken, until where a line of tall water-canes appeared to cross its extensive surface; and towards this point our friend directed his, or rather her course, for it turned out to be an enormous sow, arrived at her full growth, but whose speed and vigour were nowise abated by that corpulency which, both in man and beast, is apt to stamp its weight on the years of maturity.

This gentle specimen of the bristly race, though far from possessing the beauty or symmetry of the gazelle or antelope, appeared almost to rival those animals in speed; and notwithstanding our horses were all doing their best, well assisted with the "Brummagems" and sharp edges of the shovel-shaped iron-stirrups

belonging to our Eastern friends,* still she kept a long way a-head of us, and we gained on her little or nothing for the first mile, which, although over hard ground, was deeply indented with sun-cracks and yawning chasms, across which we thundered along, luckily without accident or mishap.

From having had a better start than my companions, and perhaps a better horse, I had taken the lead, and maintained it, keeping the old Dongola at his very best speed. After a sharp burst of nearly a mile at this pace, I rapidly began to close with the chase, could hear the sobs of the interesting and distressed lady, and even distinctly see the white foam churning down from her wide opened and steaming chaps. We had now gained about half the distance between the rice-fields and the tall canes above mentioned, and which I concluded must border the banks of a canal.

* The edge of this oriental stirrup acts on the horse's side as a spur, and a very severe one, inflicting often deep and severe gashes.

It was therefore of importance to bring the business to a close ere that point should be attained, and I stretched every nerve to effect this object. I was now close at the heels of the monster—the spurs were in my horse's flanks —my spear in rest—and a second more would have safely lodged its glittering point behind the high and bristly shoulder-blades; when the beast making a sudden turn at right angles, I was unavoidably thrown out. However, my ally, Smith, was at hand. He made a dash, which sent her back in the original course; and I was soon again close upon her, well raised in the stirrups, and straining forward to give the death-thrust. At this critical moment she floundered through a dark belt of deep marshy ground, which in our rapid course we had come on unawares.

There was no time to pull up, and my horse—from the top of his speed—was instantaneously transferred to the top of his head, which firmly planted in the bog, caused me, at the same time, to make a somersault, luckily sending me clear of his over-rolling

weight, and lodging my precious person,—without injury or fracture,—in the midst of a pool of fine fat and unctuous black mud.

Some seconds elapsed ere I could release both myself and horse from this extremely unpleasant situation. Smith, in the meantime, spurred on; but the ground had now so completely assumed a marshy character, as to render the odds of the race greatly in favour of our antagonist, who succeeded in gaining the covert of canes above alluded to, and which—on reaching—we found to border a broad and deep canal.

As we were pretty close up when our quarry had gained this shelter, and seeing no traces of her crossing the canal, we naturally concluded she was somewhere hid along its sedgy bank; and accordingly, with Snow and the Bedouin Sheikh—who had by this time come up—immediately commenced a diligent search, which proving ineffectual, we determined on swimming the canal, in hopes of hitting off her trail on the opposite side of the water.

Our Leander-like exploit produced, however, no other result than giving us a partial cleansing; and at the end of a long and fruitless research, we gave it up as a bad job, regained the bank of the Mahmoudieh, near the village of El Birket, and at last reached our kunjah, after a severe day's work for both men and horses.

We continued for a couple of days longer at Abou-el-Kader, during which time we had several good runs, much resembling the one just described; but not succeeding in securing any heads or tusks, we will not try the reader's patience by a further description of our failures. Suffice it to say, this excursion proved that, with somewhat better nags, and at a rather earlier season of the year—before the country is quite so much under water—capital hog-hunting may be had within twenty miles of Alexandria; to obtain which the sportsman has to go no farther than the villages of Abou-el-Kader or El Birket, on the banks of the Canal.

* * * *

Our Alexandrian friends were not a little astonished to hear, on our return, that they were actually in the midst of a fine hunting country —and numerous were the sporting parties in consequence projected; but professional duty now gave a summons which led me once more to the coast of Syria, where I shortly afterwards contracted a severe illness, obliging me hastily to depart for England; and thus were crushed in the very bud, and ended for the present, all hopes of further "Hog-hunting in the Plains of Lower Egypt."

CHAPTER IX.

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINE OF ST. HUBERT.

Half-pay—Resolve to visit the Shrine of St. Hubert—The Meuse—An agreeable companion—Huy—The Valley of Houyeux—The botanist—Supposed lunacy—The "Grivière"—A bad night's rest—A fray—Difference of opinion—An éclaircissement—St. Hubert and hydrophobia—The "Sainte Etole"—The Ardennes—Game found in its forests—The Brothers Titeux—The "Converserie"—Life of St. Hubert—Arrival at the shrine—Relics—Number of pilgrims—The "Neuvaine"—Its observances—Efficacy in curing hydrophobia—The Abbey—The "precautionary ordeal"—Departure from St. Hubert—Return home.

CHAPTER IX.

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINE OF ST. HUBERT.*

"Here is a holy pilgrim come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome;
One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine
In Araby and Palestine—
On hills of Lebanon hath been
Where Noah's tomb may yet be seen."

MARMION.

ONCE more returned to Old England, it was not long ere I received a summons to join my regiment in the West Indies; but finding

* St. Hubert is the patron of the chase, and protector of all its votaries. The tomb and shrine of the saint are in a remote spot in the midst of the wilds of the Ardennes, in Belgium, where every year his anniversary is solemnly kept on the third day of November.

myself, through ill health, unequal to the task, "half-pay"—ominous sounding word!—was the painful alternative, to which a medical board, in its tender mercies, now consigned me. However, ere depositing myself for good, on the easy chair of repose in the snug little study, to which the reader has already been introduced, methought I was in duty bound to visit the shrine of the good St. Hubert,—the hunter's patron,—and who had so oft befriended me in the toils and dangers of the chase.

Rife with this intent, I girded up my loins, crossed the channel, and one gloomy autumnal morning, by the faint light of a grey dawn still struggling with the mists of night, I found myself with pack on back and staff in hand, wending my solitary course through the—at this early hour—as yet deserted, dark, and narrow streets of the good old town of Liege; when, reaching the banks of the winding Meuse, I stepped on board the small iron steamer which, daily plying over its shallow waters, runs up the stream, through a never-ending variety of charming scenery, as far as Namur,—from

whence I proposed commencing my pedestrian expedition to the shrine of St. Hubert, and being present at the celebration of his "fête." However, I was induced to alter my plans by falling in—whilst pacing the narrow deck of the little river craft—with a most agreeable companion, who expatiated so largely on the romantic beauties of the valley of the Houyeux, through which he was bound,—on a botanizing expedition into the Ardennes,—that, glad of the chance of society, and foregoing my original purpose,—I landed, with my new acquaintance, at Huy.

My companion I soon found to be a complete enthusiast in the science he pursued—the vegetable world holding, in his estimation, the first class amongst existing things; and being, according to his opinion, mysteriously linked by ties rarely understood by the vulgar, and oft imperceptible even to the initiated, with the more active though not less noble part of the animal creation; but though so completely wrapped up in this favourite science, my "compagnon de voyage" was,

from his general information and knowledge of the localities, well adapted to play the part of a Cicerone.

On landing at the small, though very ancient city of Huy,—the birthplace of Peter the Hermit,—situated at the junction of that pretty, clear little stream: the Houyeux, with the broader Meuse; he pointed out the chapel where, until within a few years past, had rested the bones of that first instigator of the Holy Wars—of the enthusiastic monk who, Cross in hand, had once raised nearly the whole chivalry of Christendom against the powers of Islam and the might of the Crescent. Here, also, was the spot where, in 1577, Marguerite de Valois, the Queen of Henry IV. of France, was nearly drowned by a sudden swell of the now puny stream before us; *there* were some ruins, attributed to the devastating hand of Attila and his barbarous Huns; in short, scarce a spot of this interesting country—the cradle of the Crusades—the birthplace of the pious Godfrey de Bouillon, and the scene of so many events in later times—but was

connected with some story or legend known to the "Botanist," in whose mouth the names of Charles of Burgundy, Louis XI., and William de la Marck—the terrible Boar of the Ardennes, —were now familiar as "household terms."

In such company, and amidst such localities and scenery, the journey, as may be supposed, appeared neither long nor tedious; nor was I sorry to find that my companion was going the same road with myself as far as St. Hubert; but on mentioning that *my* destination was likewise a "pilgrimage" to that place, and proposing that we should perform the trip together, I observed a shade to pass over his countenance; —he appeared to grow more reserved, and assumed a restraint of manner and demeanour which I attributed to my last proposal not being acceptable; and plainly naming my suspicions on the subject, begged that he would not stand on ceremony, but state it to me at once.

"No, no,—believe me, my dear sir, you completely mistake my motives, if I appear to shew any reluctance in acceding to your

request; for nothing could possibly give me greater pleasure than your society, but"—and here he hesitated; "you will, I hope, excuse what I am about to say?"

"Certainly," replied I; "pray proceed!"

"Well, then, Monsieur will pardon me if I remark that I think you ought,—since the pilgrimage is your object,—to reach St. Hubert as soon as possible; I would even recommend your returning to Huy, and hiring a 'caraban,' for every moment of time is precious, and may not be redeemed."

"'Tis true," said I, "that I am anxious to visit the shrine of the saint; but I do not perceive in so doing that there exists any such pressing haste, as to put me under the necessity of depriving myself of your most agreeable company, or of hurrying through this interesting and romantic country, and the beautiful scenery with which we are at every step surrounded."

"Mais, mille pardons, mon cher Monsieur —are you aware of the fatal consequences which may result from the least delay on your part?—I even now tremble for your safety."

Perfectly at a loss to make out his meaning, I stood still for a moment, and looked him earnestly in the face, as if waiting for the explanation of his mysterious words,—when, with still greater embarrassment in his manner than he had hitherto evinced, he said—"Think it not impertinent curiosity on my part, if I ask how long it is since you met with the dreadful misfortune?"

A new light here burst on me. I now began, as I fancied, to see how matters stood;—the enthusiastic pursuit of one all-engrossing object had produced a not unusual effect on my poor acquaintance. Botany and the constant endeavours to dive into the secrets of nature had evidently turned his brain. Therefore, concluding him to be at the moment in one of the unfortunate moods peculiar to those in his unhappy position,—when their ideas, breaking through the intricate meshwork of the brain, wildly run riot for a time, and wander without control, plan, or object,—I endeavoured to divert the channel of his thoughts, and wishing to give a new turn to the conversation, merely replied, that we were all subject in this

world to misfortunes; but that the true sign of wisdom was to bear them philosophically, with Christian fortitude and endurance.

To this moralizing strain he replied not, but seemed lost in a profound reverie,—and imitating his silence whilst still following the course of the Houyeux, we proceeded to a point where it became necessary either to ford the stream, or make a considerable "détour" in order to reach the bridge;—not feeling inclined to get a wetting, I expressed some reluctance at the former plan, and proposed going round to the latter place.

On saying this I could not fail to observe the deep-felt concern expressed on my companion's countenance—and in the most earnest and energetic manner he immediately disclaimed every intention of either distressing me, or hurting my feelings, adding, that had he reflected for a minute, he ought to have known how repugnant it must be for me under present circumstances, to come in contact with the limpid element.

This and other similar speeches of the

Botanist removed all doubts which I might hitherto have entertained as to the soundness of his intellects, and convinced me that he must have started on his present expedition after escaping from the restraint of a strait jacket, or at least, from the recesses of some lunatic asylum,—however, as he appeared perfectly harmless and inoffensive, I did not trouble myself more on the subject; and forthwith, without further remarks, proceeded to the bridge,—a rustic wooden structure,—on the other side of which stood the humble "Cabaret," where we proposed taking up our quarters for the night; and on arriving there—with appetites not a little sharpened by our long walk—immediately inquired of "mine Host" what we could have for supper?

"Pour cela," said he, we have "de quoi" for half-a-dozen people more hungry than "Messieurs,"—at the same time pointing to a heap of thrushes lying in a corner, from the legs of which a curly-headed urchin, seated on a low stool, was busily engaged in taking off sundry nooses made of horsehair, which plainly

spoke, as to the manner of their capture; though it puzzled me to think of how that had been effected in such numbers,—for there lay "floored" at least five or six dozen fine birds.

"Our 'Petit,' has as you see, had a fine haul at the 'Grivière,'* and he has besides brought in, this bag of 'écrevisses,' of which you can likewise have 'à discretion.' "

Seeing the commissariat thus well supplied, removed all apprehensions of a famine; and telling mine host to cook the whole bag of lobsters and a couple of dozen birds;—whilst he was engaged in the mysteries of the "Cuisine" I approached my chair to the "Petit," to ascertain by what cunning device he had secured so many prizes—and learnt that at this period of the autumn, several thousands

* The Grivière is the place where the "grives" or thrushes are snared; these latter are in the Ardennes birds of passage, and cross over in great numbers during the spring and autumn. The "écrevisse" is neither more nor less than the fresh-water lobster or prawn, a kind of craw-fish, smaller than the former, but considerably exceeding in size the latter.

of horsehair nooses were daily set by the peasants of the neighbourhood, in the surrounding copses;—in each noose a berry of the serving tree being suspended, attracts the unsuspicious thrushes, which alight in quest of food, and many of which, in plucking this "fruit of knowledge," get ensnared either by the neck or legs;—in the latter case, not unfrequently, during their struggles, giving "leg-bail" by leaving the shackled member behind them. Our youthful votary of St. Hubert proceeded to inform us that his daily occupation, at this time of the year, was visiting the "Grivière" in the morning,—when having secured all the captives, and replaced the injured or broken snares,—he commenced his "chasse" of the "écrevisses"—as a preliminary to which, it was first necessary to catch a quantity of "grenouilles" (frogs), when having divested them of their hinder legs, he inserted the latter into a slit in a hazel twig. With a bundle of these rods on his shoulder, he followed the course of the stream, every here and there—in the most likely spots—fixing one into the bank, so

that the bait might rest on the ground under water, in the hole made by a small whirling eddy, below a piece of rock, or beneath the root of some old tree. After thus planting his sentries, his business was next to visit in succession the different posts, when, if he found an enemy nibbling at the frog's leg, the hazel twig was quickly withdrawn from the water, and with it the "écrevisse," who forthwith took up his abode in the depths of the bag carried for that purpose, and which, at the end of the day's campaign, was frequently most unwillingly tenanted by some ten or twelve dozen of captive lobsters.

By the time the young urchin had given us the above account, that part of the produce of his aquatic "chasse" intended for our own particular use, appeared in their goodly array of scarlet jackets; and during the time the bird tribe were still undergoing the culinary process, we made repeated and successful attacks on the vanguard of the "écrevisses." Whilst thus engaged, the "Botanist" displayed one or two "bizarreries," which fully con-

firmed me in the opinion of his not being in a right state of mind. After observing that water was his usual drink, he called for a flagon of the pure element, and was in the act of politely filling my glass with the same, when I remarked that such a beverage after a hard day's work did not suit my complaint.

No sooner had I uttered these words, than with the utmost precipitation he removed the vessel out of my sight, making at the same time, in the most agitated manner, no end of apologies, for having unintentionally been guilty of such an inadvertency to a person in my unfortunate circumstances.

However, whatever might have been the state of his mind, my friend appeared determined freely to administer to his corporeal wants, for never did I behold such havoc as he indiscriminately committed,—first with the lobsters, and then on the thrushes,—ere he finally succeeded in blunting the sharp and gnawing fangs of hunger.

At last, both of us having eaten our fill, we desired mine host to shew us where we

were to be accommodated for the night; and, though not expecting either four-post beds or carpeted chambers, we were not a little dismayed, when ascending into a kind of loft, we were shewn a couple of miserable couches, divested of curtains or any other appurtenances, and placed in the most unpleasant state of contiguous approximation.

Independently of the inconvenience and annoyance of being thus "stalled," in company, I felt a particular aversion to passing the night with one whom I began to consider,—if not as a decided madman,—yet as certainly subject, in a distressing degree, to mental alienation; nor was his repugnance to the arrangement less powerfully manifested than my own. However, our host, assuring us it was the only place he had, there appeared to be no alternative, and we were forced, however reluctantly, to submit to our fate.

When our worthy Boniface had retired, the Botanist throwing himself, without undressing, on one of the humble pallets, averred his intention of thus passing the night. Deter-

mined, in this respect, to follow his example, and blowing out the light, I—completely overcome by the fatigues of a long day's march, increased by the unaccustomed burthen of a heavy knapsack—soon found myself firmly locked in the arms of Morpheus; and had, apparently, been long in this state of happy oblivion, when I was suddenly aroused from my slumbers by the most piteous moans, and unearthly sounds issuing from the locality of my companion's bed.

Hastily starting up, and—in the profound darkness which reigned around—groping my way to the head of his couch, I laid hold of his shoulder, and forcibly shook him, inquiring at the same time what was the matter?

Instead of receiving a reply, I found myself suddenly grasped by the throat, whilst the dismal moaning which had awoke me was changed into piercing shrieks of "Murder!" and cries for help—though of the two parties—*I* certainly appeared most in need of the latter.

The best of tempers may at last give way to anger, more particularly when an iron grasp

on the throat threatens instant strangulation. In such a situation expostulation was out of the question; but disengaging one arm, I applied with such good will my right fist into his countenance, that he instantly relaxed his hold. At this moment the crazy truckle bed—the scene of this fierce conflict—gave way with a fearful crash; we both rolled together on the ground, and whilst in the act of there grappling with the foe, and amidst the most dreadful uproar imaginable—mine host, with light in hand, rushed "en chemise" into the room, followed by two or three individuals, male and female,—but all in the same scanty nocturnal attire!

The scene which now presented itself, must, —to a disinterested spectator,—have been ludicrous and amusing in the extreme; the two combatants furiously battling on the floor—one with a countenance distorted with rage, and nearly blackened from the effects of recent throttling,—whilst the blood ('twas from the nose) flowed freely from the other,—for the Botanist's dripping proboscis bore ample evi-

dence to the sanguinary nature of the fray; whilst at his unceasing and energetic vociferations of "Il est enragé!—on m'assassine!—au secours!" the whole posse, men and women, —*he*mises and *che*mises,—forcibly seized, overpowered, and secured me; and my antagonist, apparently quite exhausted with the effects of the combat, threw himself breathless on the remaining bed; wiping away, at the same time, the crimson gouts which, in rapid succession, continued to course each other from his much injured and roughly-handled nasal organ.

Whilst things were in this state of suspense, all parties for a few seconds maintained a profound silence, which was at last broken by my asking the man of "herbs and simples" what the devil he meant by attempting to strangle me?

"C'est vous, Monsieur, qui m'avez presque tué"—it is *you*, Sir, who have nearly killed me)—was the reply of the Botanist, as soon as he had recovered enough breath to give utterance to the words;—"and if you were not, as you have confessed, on the "Pélérinage," (Pilgrimage,) and under the influence of

that dreadful malady, you should give me instant *raison* (satisfaction) for your brutal conduct."

"Sir," answered I—not a little wroth, but still not understanding the exact purport of his words,—"and if I did not consider *you* in a state of mental aberration, I would twist off that bleeding nose of yours, and make you devour it without salt;—at all events our joint trip to St. Hubert is at an end—as for the future, I do not mean to travel any more with insane company."

"Mon Dieu!—mon Dieu!" exclaimed our fat little host, "I see how it is—que la rage me possède*—may madness possess me if ever I again take in these maudits Pélérins! (cursed Pilgrims;) but quick, Jeannette!—give me the holy relic, blessed by St. Hubert, which thou wearest round thy neck, and that will settle all, and at any rate keep them quiet."

The fat, sturdy serving wench, whom he addressed, immediately took off a small brass

* The French word "la rage" means more properly "hydrophobia," than mere madness and insanity.

image of what appeared to be a stag, with a human figure kneeling before it,—but in so doing was evidently reminded that only a scanty garment concealed but a small portion of her rustic charms, for, on delivering up the precious relic,—probably giving way to the dictates of modesty,—she immediately retired into the background, where she remained in a sort of "Venus de Medici"-like attitude, but still an attentive and observant spectatress of what was about to ensue.

Meanwhile, Monsieur Pierre, who, till now, had never relaxed his hold, after muttering a few words in Latin, applied the relic to my forehead, and saying, "He will now be quiet," went apparently to perform a similar process of exorcism on my still bleeding and panting antagonist, by whom he was, however, most ungraciously and indignantly repulsed.

"Sacré bête!" exclaimed the latter,—"for what and whom do you take me? I have no more hydrophobia than yourself; and although certainly on my way to St. Hubert, mine is no 'Pélérinage,' as I am merely going there

on a visit, and to botanize with my friend Dr. D——."

"Oh! c'est autre chose—(that's quite different.) I beg you a thousand pardons; but on learning that you were together bound to St. Hubert, I of course thought that you had both been bitten, and were in common on a similar errand."

"There appears," said I, "to be some extraordinary mistake in all this. What do you mean by bitten? The only bites I have received are those inflicted by the swarms of vermin in this vile tenement, which, together with that gentleman's mad howling and hideous cries, awoke me from a most delightful slumber, a few minutes before you came into the room."

"Ah! pour cela c'est un peu fort," (Anglice—"that wont go down, old fellow,") said Monsieur Pierre, with a knowing wink at the Botanist; "je sais que vous autres enragés vous êtes quelquefois diablement malins, (I know that you madmen are sometimes devilish cunning;) that gentleman's story *may* be true,

because he says he knows Monsieur le Docteur D——, at St. Hubert; and I have no doubt but that *you*, sir, will soon become acquainted with him also."

"Au diable avec votre Docteur!" (to the deuce with your doctor!) exclaimed I, beginning again to wax ireful; "I am no more mad than yourself, except that I know you consider all my countrymen a little cracked. I am an English traveller, going through the Ardennes, for my pleasure, and wishing to visit the shrine of St. Hubert, partly 'par curiositié,' and partly because he is the patron of the chase,—I having once in my day been a 'grand chasseur.'"

This statement appeared to stagger Monsieur Pierre. He at first would not credit my assertion of being an Englishman, and "not mad;" nor indeed, did either my assumed manners, appearance, or costume, mark me as a Briton. However, on producing my passport, he became convinced of the fact; was then unbounded in the measure of his apologies,—thinking, no doubt, that the pocket of a "voyageur Anglais" stood a better chance of

being well lined than that of either a French or German "hydrophobic" pilgrim or pedlar; to which latter character I certainly seemed to have considerable affinity.

The passport had also a wonderful effect on the Botanist; for holding a handkerchief to his nose with one hand, he cordially proffered me the other, saying, as he plainly saw that the whole misunderstanding had resulted in a "quid pro quo;" that we had throughout, been playing at cross questions and crooked answers; and hoping all might be forgotten, that we should continue good friends, and "compagnons de voyage." "But," added he, "I must confess that when you first mentioned that you were on a 'Pélérinage' to St. Hubert's shrine, I took you for one of those unfortunates who, having been bitten by a mad dog, are under the influence of hydrophobia, and resort thither every year by hundreds to be cured through the mediation of the Saint."

"Then the fact is," replied I, "that we have both been mutually considering each other as mad, and I was confirmed in this

latter opinion by the fearful moan you uttered in your sleep——"

"Caused," interrupted he, "by those cursed 'écrevisses.' They gave me a dreadful nightmare, which, acting upon the thoughts already uppermost in my mind, made me fancy myself in the fangs of so many mad dogs; and when you tried to arouse me from my disturbed sleep, methought I was in an equally dangerous position, by being in the power of one whom I considered as a maniac, which caused me, on the impulse of the moment, as the only means of self-defence, to seize you by the throat, whilst I roared out so lustily for help."

I could not help laughing heartily at this "Comedy of Errors;" but as the "grey-eyed morn began to smile o'er departing night," any further attempt at repose was out of the question, so requesting Monsieur Pierre to get us a bowl of hot milk and bread ere we started; whilst this was preparing I learnt from the Botanist what I was perfectly ignorant of before, — viz., that St. Hubert

was not only the patron of the chase, but also the professed guardian and protector against madness, as likewise the curer of that most dreadful of maladies—hydrophobia; that the consequences of a visit to his shrine were not confined to the recovery of a person already labouring under the fearful infliction; but a pilgrimage thither,—with the requisite concomitant of implicit faith and belief, together with wearing any article of dress which had previously been blessed at his altar, and touched by the "Sainte Etole,"*—was a sure preventive against madness at any future period of the pilgrim's life.

"But," added the Botanist, "when we arrive at St. Hubert, my friend Dr. D——, who has had thousands and thousands of pilgrims under his care, will give you more information on a subject relative to which many strangers are often incredulous; and,

* The "Sainte Etole" is the holy scarf which St. Hubert is said to have received from heaven; and the most implicit faith and confidence is placed, by all classes, in its efficacy.

'en attendant,' let us partake of the breakfast which, I have no doubt, Monsieur Pierre has by this time prepared, as we have a long day's march before us, and the sooner we start the better."

Having made a hearty meal of brown bread and hot milk, we shouldered our knapsacks, and proceeded forth on our way, occasionally giving way to a burst of merriment as we recalled the ludicrous occurrences of the preceding night; whilst my companion, whose learning in legendary lore has been already adverted to, would oft lighten the fatigue of the road, by many a well-told tale relating to the woodland Saint, whose shrine we were now fast approaching.

The country we traversed was beautiful and interesting in the extreme; each of the numerous tributaries of the Meuse, running through deep and romantic valleys, whose steep and precipitous, though well-wooded sides—now clothed in the variegated and gaudy livery of the falling year—abounded with every species of game; whilst the clear

sparkling waters murmuring at their base—o'ershadowed alternately by the spreading branches of beech and birch, of oak or alder—swarmed with fine trout, to say nothing of "écrevisses," which we have already so honourably made mention of. In short, the localities appeared calculated to afford the "ne plus ultra" of a sportsman's wishes.

In succession did we pass the little towns of Bois and Marche and Champlon; entering, as we advanced, a wilder and wilder country; till, on leaving the latter place,—one gloomy, drizzling autumnal morning,—we at last fairly found ourselves in the solitudes where the melancholy Jaques did "moralize and muse:"—

> "Under an oak whose antique root peeps out
> Upon the brook that brawls along this wood."

And as we dived into its leafy recesses, we could exclaim with Rosalind,—"Well, this is the forest of Arden!" To which Touchstone replies,—"Ay, now am I in Arden! the more fool I. When I was at home I was in a better place; but travellers must be content."* And

* "As You Like It," Act ii., Scene 4.

so were we; nor was it any longer to us a matter of surprise that the good St. Hubert should have fixed his abode in a neighbourhood so favourable in all respects—even in these degenerate times—to every pursuit connected with the "merrie art of woodcraft."

The numerous streams which flow through the Ardennes are,—as has already been remarked,—swarming with the finest fish; its cultivated plains teem with lesser game, such as hares and partridges; whilst the "brown horrors" of boundless forest covering its broken surface, shelter the larger animals of the chase —the lordly stag, the fleet and graceful roebuck, and the bristly wild boar; nor are the still more savage and dreaded denizens of the wilderness entirely unknown in these parts; for oft in the depths of winter,

> "Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave,
> Burning for blood; bony and gaunt and grim,
> Assembling wolves, in raging troops descend,"—

scared by famine from their usual haunts; approach the boundaries of the forest,—when woe betide any stray sheep or cattle, which are then

sure to fall under their ruthless and bloody fangs!†

* * * * *

Champlon—which, by the bye—is only a miserable little cabaret, surrounded by a desolate and barren heath, in the midst of the forest of the Ardennes—was our last resting-place, ere we reached the end of our pilgrimage, at the shrine of St. Hubert. Shortly after leaving this lowly "hostellerie," the road entered the depths of the forest, once so celebrated as the resort of William de la Marck,

† The Ardennes is, in every respect, particularly adapted as a residence to the votary of St. Hubert: the abundance and variety of game—the facility of obtaining access to the latter—its proximity, through the powerful agencies of steam and railroad, to our own shores—all combine to attract thither the lover of the chase; and if economy be an object, nowhere is living to be obtained at so cheap a rate. As an instance of this, one of the sheep here mentioned as being occasionally victimized by the wolves—about the size of our Welsh mutton—might, in the autumn of 1842, be had for the sum of three francs! though it is true that, owing to the severe drought experienced during the preceding summer, cattle of every description were then selling at an unusually reduced rate.

—the Boar of the Ardennes,—and his lawless followers, who, in its pathless and boundless extent, oft found refuge and shelter against the vengeance of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, whose ire they so frequently aroused by manifold deeds of atrocity and depredation; but old times are changed, and in this instance, for the better; as the peaceful and unarmed traveller can now in safety traverse its most retired solitudes, without fear of hindrance or chance of molestation; save that in the depths of winter he may yet perchance occasionally see a solitary wolf stealing stealthily across his path, whilst in quest of an easier prey than his redoubted enemy, man. Even the chances of occasionally encountering a wild boar, are now very uncertain and remote; most of the bristly tribe in the surrounding districts having,—as my companion informed me,—become of late years nearly extirpated, by three brothers of the name of Titeux; very Nimrods in their way, whom he said had, without the aid of either horse or spear, gun or rifle, and merely armed with a common knife, and on foot, nearly annihilated the swinish race; much to the satis-

faction of the surrounding farmers, amongst whose scanty crops they used to commit dreadful havoc.

I expressed some little incredulity,—not at the success of their sylvan warfare,—but at the means wherewith it had been carried into effect.

"You will probably soon have an opportunity of hearing what I now relate, from one of themselves," replied he; "for like the slayer of the goose in the fable, they, in their zeal, so far overshot the mark, as to have completely destroyed not only all the 'sangliers,' but with the latter, what had become a profitable and even a lucrative pursuit—for they generally obtained good prices for the carcasses of their slaughtered enemies;—but now, their vocation being at an end, they are engaged in what, though far less pleasing and profitable than the pleasures of the chase, is almost as arduous an occupation—viz., that of carrying the letter-bag from St. Hubert to Wellin and back again, the distance of nearly forty miles,—a trip rendered more toilsome by the wild, rugged, and pathless nature of the country to be traversed,

and the necessity of its being made during the night, and in all weathers; for neither fog, rain, snow, nor tempest, can stop Victor Titeux, the hardiest of the three brothers, and under whose direction *you* will probably have to proceed; as a guide is absolutely necessary for a stranger going from St. Hubert to Wellin, which you must first reach, on your way to visit Prince Pierre Napoleon,† at his residence of Mohimond, situated in the vicinity of the latter place."

* * * * *

Scarcely had my companion finished his account of the three brother-huntsmen, when, suddenly emerging into an open space cleared from the adjoining forest, a "charmille,"‡ curiously fashioned into the shape of a crucifix,

† A nephew of Bonaparte, who, at the period alluded to, was leading the life of a sportsman at the above-mentioned place, where he received the Author with the greatest kindness and hospitality.

‡ The beech-tree, when kept trimmed and cut low, is so called, and generally constitutes those formal, squared hedges, so common in Continental gardens and pleasure grounds.

first gave intimation that the hand of man had been at work in these wild and extensive solitudes; next, surrounded by majestic beech trees, an old farm-house opened to our view; when my companion, pointing to the edifice before us, said "This place is called the 'Converserie,' from being the spot where the miraculous conversion of St. Hubert took place. Let us step in, and whilst we are getting a little bread and cheese, you shall see an account of this event duly recorded in the written life of the saint, which I know to be in possession of the good folks who occupy the residence in front of us."

We accordingly entered the farm-house, and at the request of the Botanist,—whilst some refreshment was preparing,—a venerable-looking little book,—dog-eared, well-thumbed, and its leaves moreover rejoicing in a superabundance of dark, greasy, unctuous matter,—was put into my hand. It was entitled, "La Vie du grand St. Hubert, Fondateur et Premier Evêque de la Noble Cité de Liége." On the title-page was the representation of an ecclesio-

sporting figure, doubly armed with crosier and bugle-horn—the respective emblems of his twofold vocation.

A translation of this curious old document is here offered, for the reader's edification:—

Life of St. Hubert,

THE PATRON OF THE CHASE, AND PROTECTOR AGAINST "MADNESS."

" Of lesser ills the Muse declines to sing,
Nor stoops so low; of these each groom can tell
The proper remedy. But oh! what care,
What prudence can prevent *madness*—the worst
Of maladies? Terrific pest! that blasts
The huntsman's hopes, and desolation spreads
Through all th' unpeopled kennel unrestrain'd.

" The air of a Court has a certain destructive and undermining influence on virtue, which is there exposed to great and unavoidable temptations, and where, moreover, vice is so much looked up to and honoured, that the most heroic courage is often requisite to preserve innocence from its baneful contagion; but what to human nature is an impossibility, is by no means such to Divine grace, which at all times and in all places shews the effects of its infinite and beneficial power.

" St. Hubert, the son of Bertrand, Duke of Aquitaine, and of Hubernia, (the sister of Ste. Oda,) was of most illustrious parentage, since he traced his origin by the paternal as well as maternal side, from that royal blood, so celebrated for the number of holy saints to which it has given birth.

" His aunt Ste. Oda took the greatest pains to bring him up in the fear of God, and in the knowledge of those devoirs and exercises requisite to a youth of noble birth and lineage. For this purpose she sent him to the King, at Paris, in order that he might there learn the manners and usages of Courts, and where he no sooner appeared, than he shewed his praiseworthy intentions by rendering himself agreeable to every one. St. Hubert continued at Court till the conduct of Ebroïn, the Mayor of the Palace, (who, abusing the King's favour, exercised the most unbounded tyranny,) so completely disgusted him, that he demanded his dismissal and retired to Herstal, near Liege, the residence of his cousin Pepin, King of Austrasia, who, after having tested his prudence and

abilities, made him 'grand-maître-d'hôtel' at his Court, and advised him to espouse Floribana, the daughter of Dagobert, Count of Louvain.

"It was during his residence with Pepin that happened, in the following manner, the wonderful conversion of St. Hubert. Being one day hotly engaged, amidst the Forest of the Ardennes, in the pursuit of a noble stag, he, after a long and arduous chase, at last succeeded in the bringing the animal to bay, when, to his great astonishment, a crucifix suddenly appeared between the branching antlers, whilst the stag distinctly uttered the following words:—'*Oh, Hubert! Hubert! how long wilt thou continue to waste thy time? Art thou not aware thou art born to know, to love, and to serve the Almighty God—thy Creator?*'

"Astonished and stupified at the occurrence of such an extraordinary event, Hubert throws himself from his horse, prostrates himself before the holy emblem of salvation, and listens to the order of the Almighty to proceed immediately to St. Lambert, the Bishop of

Maëstricht, for the purpose of being instructed in the Christian faith. No sooner had he, in following these instructions, approached the man of God, but the Spirit of the Lord, acting powerfully on his soul, and seconding the salutary advice of his monitor, perfected his conversion. He was baptized, and immediately conceived the greatest desire to serve God in a more perfect state. Whilst contemplating this design, Heaven greatly facilitated the execution of his laudable projects, by the death of his wife Floribana,* who left him a son named Floribert, which latter imi-

* One of the popular "Chansons" current in the Ardennes gives another version of this, making the death of the fair Floribana the cause of St. Hubert first being a "mighty hunter in the face of the Lord," in order, by the stirring nature of this pursuit, to assuage his deep and inconsolable grief. The following are the couplets relating to this event:—

"Le Comte d'Agobert
Donna pour épouse à Hubert,
Sa fille bien-aimée.
Très-noble et parfaite en beauté
Mais en peu de temps
Quel changement!
La mort sans égard
La frappa de son dard;

tated the sanctity of his father, and eventually succeeded him in his bishopric.

"Having performed the last duties towards his deceased wife, he went to Aquitaine, where he found his father on the point of death; when, after aiding him to deliver up his soul to God, he made over to his younger brother, Endo, the extensive property which had devolved on him, and returning to his spiritual monitor, St. Lambert, demanded to be admitted amongst the number of his clerks, who then commonly followed a monastic life.

Sa très-chère moitié
Lui fut ravie sans pitié!
D'un si cruel destin
Hubert crut mourir de chagrin.

"Dans cette affliction,
Hubert sans consolation,
Il gémit jour et nuit,
Son cœur est accablé d'ennui;
Pour se consoler
Et se dissiper,
Il prend son piqueur
Et tous ses chasseurs,
Il dompte son regret
Dans les plus sombres forêts;

"Having obtained this wish, after distributing to the poor—for the love of the Lord Jesus Christ—the residue of his worldly possessions, he, in order to lay proportionate foundations for that great spirit of holiness inspired by the direct intervention of Heaven, took leave of St. Lambert, and retiring to the original scene of his miraculous conversion—the Forest of the Ardennes—he, on the very spot where utterance had been granted to the beast of the chase, and since known as the 'Converserie,' raised a humble abode, gave

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Mais, hélas, quel malheur!
Il ne peut effacer ses douleurs.

"Un jour que ce chasseur
Poursuivoit avec chaleur,
D'une ardeur sans égale,
Un cerf à la course de cheval;
Loin de son piqueur,
Quelle fut sa frayeur!
Son étonnement
Fut bien des plus grand;
Le cerf qu'il poursuivit,
S'arrête et revient droit à lui,
En lui disant: 'Chasseur,
Pourquoi poursuis-tu ton Sauveur?'"

himself up to prayer and the communion of the angels; abandoning entirely the society of men. His delicate body was now mortified with flagellations and fasts, watchings, and other severe penances. He, moreover, constantly wore next his skin a heavy iron cuirass, concealing this austerity under the coarse folds of a common grey sackcloth.

"Seven long years of this unceasing penance having elapsed, the Almighty—who favoured the country of Liege—despatched an angel to our holy anchorite, directing him to repair to Rome, there to honour the sainted relics of St. Peter—the Prince of the Apostles. Having communicated this holy inspiration to St. Lambert, and also obtained his approval and benediction, he girded up his loins, and went forthwith on his mission, full of holy faith, charity, and devotion.

"The very night on which our Pilgrim entered the city of Rome an angel appeared to Pope Sergius, and informed him of the death of St. Lambert, who had been cruelly assassinated by the impious Dodon, for the same cause that

occasioned the death of St. John the Baptist. He next advised him of its being the will of God that a certain person named Hubert, who would appear the following day at St. Peter's, to honour the relics of the holy Apostle, should be duly anointed as the successor of the sainted Bishop of Liege. The Holy Father immediately ordered some of his retinue to go and find this man of God; and as soon as they perceived him, they approached and conducted him to the presence of the Father of the Church, by whom he was soon recognised, from the angel's description; when Pope Sergius informed him of the death of St. Lambert, and that it was the Divine will that he should be his anointed successor.

"When St. Hubert learned the death of his patron, he was at first overwhelmed with grief, and next tried to evade the charge imposed on him by the Holy Father, by alleging his incompetence to undertake so great a charge, and to succeed a man of such holy pretensions and exalted merit.

"Whilst thus expostulating, an Angel visibly

appeared, bearing in his hands the pontifical garments of St. Lambert, which he had conveyed from the very place of his martyrdom. This apparition exhorted St. Hubert to comply with the Divine will, to bend his shoulders to the important charge with which he was to be honoured; and that the Holy Ghost would fill him with the gift of wisdom, to enable him rightly to fulfil the duties of a good shepherd to so numerous a flock.

"Overcome by such high authority and irresistible argument, he at last complied; was, on the very spot, anointed and invested with the clothes of the late Bishop of Liege by the Sovereign Pontiff's own sacred hands. The Episcopal garments were found to be complete, with the exception of the 'Etole,' or scarf, which, during the death struggle of his martyred predecessor, had been either lost or destroyed; but the most holy Virgin, the Queen of Heaven, immediately supplied the deficiency, and, by the hands of an angel, sent a celestial 'Etole,' which, on being placed on the shoulders of St. Hubert, was

endowed with the wonderful and all-powerful qualification of curing demoniacs, such as were possessed by devils, and likewise of preventing and removing the dreadful effects of that direful malady—*hydrophobia.**

"A few days after this event, as St. Hubert was celebrating mass, the great Apostle St. Peter appeared unto him, and presented him with a key composed of a metal possessing the lustre of gold, assuring him that it was a fresh pledge of the gifts of the Holy Ghost,—a pledge which he—the holy Apostle—had himself received on being anointed as bishop. The above key is, to this day, carefully preserved in the church of Ste. Croix, at Liege; and every year, on the festival of that saint, is exhibited, with great devotion, to an immense concourse of people.

* Not only amongst the simple peasants of the Ardennes, but throughout the neighbouring provinces of France and Belgium, the most implicit faith is placed in this wonderful legend; and in the supernatural powers with which, through the grace of the Blessed Virgin, the "Sainte Etole" has been thus miraculously endowed.

"St. Hubert having thus miraculously received the key, no longer doubted the favour and protection of the Lord. To exercise the offices of his trust, he therefore returned to the country of Liege, in order to be installed in his bishopric. Dodon and his sacrilegious band, learning that our saint was on his return, and fearing his well-merited reproaches, placed themselves in ambush, and made an attempt on his life; but St. Hubert, invested as he was with the garments of St. Lambert, on seeing them approach, (like another St. Martin,) made the sign of the cross, on which his assailants fell suddenly to the ground, and shortly afterwards, perished in a miserable manner.

"The first act of St. Hubert on taking possession of his diocese was to execute with the same courage and frankness what had been commenced by his generous master and predecessor—as he instantly threatened with excommunication his cousin, King Pepin, unless the latter immediately recalled his wife Plectuda, and atoned by a solemn penance, for the scandal he had caused to the whole church by

his unjust separation from that amiable and virtuous princess. The Almighty, who always acts on the heart of man, softened that of the King, who implicitly complied with the wishes of St. Hubert; and in consequence of his admonitions, and in order to annul the existing scandal, and give some satisfaction to his people, performed the required penance, and, moreover, founded a church in honour of the Queen of the Angels—the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"Whilst St. Hubert was thus engaged with the cares of his flock, he was often by Divine revelation warned to remove the relics of St. Lambert, from Maestricht, to the city of Liege, the scene of his martyrdom. And although he felt the greatest inward joy at this revelation, still he could not help experiencing serious doubts on the subject; in order to remove which, he ordered the clergy and people to undergo fasts, penances, and vigils; when having by such means ascertained the authenticity of his revelations, he next went, accompanied by the bishops, clergy, and

people, to the town of Maestricht, from whence he caused the holy relics to be transported, by the Meuse—with all due praise and honours—to their place of martyrdom.

"The town of Liege was at that period only a small and miserable hamlet; St. Hubert first surrounded it with walls, and laid the foundation of that magnificent cathedral, which subsequently, under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin and the glorious martyr: St. Lambert, became the greatest ornament of the Episcopal seat, and capital of the whole adjacent country. He likewise caused a church to be erected in honour of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, to which clergy were appointed to chaunt the praises of the King of Glory. Lastly, he framed laws and established a police for the city of Liege, to which he also granted immunities and privileges, which met with the approval of the temporal sovereigns, as well as that of the Sovereign Pontiff of the holy see; and in order to imbue its inhabitants with affection and veneration for the mother church universal, he caused the following words

to be engraven on the municipal seal:—'*Liege —the daughter of the Church of Rome;*'—a glorious title, which this city has ever since borne, without reproach or blemish, for the period of upwards of a thousand years.

"With all this vigilance in temporal matters, religion and the spiritual care of his charge no less engrossed his attention; and it is only a matter of wonder and surprise how he could at once conceive and execute so many arduous undertakings, which must, in a great measure, be attributed to Divine grace, and the power with which he was invested, of performing prodigies and miracles.

"On one occasion, as he was visiting his diocese, having arrived at a small village named Vinoch, a woman presented herself before him, who, in consequence of having broken the Sabbath, by baking bread on that day, had lost the entire use of her hands. As he was about to leave the church, she humbly prostrated herself at his feet, representing her unfortunate condition, and earnestly begged his intercession in her behalf. "*Go,*" said he,

"*never again venture to do such a thing, and thou wilt be cured;*" and instantly she recovered the full use of her hands, to the wonder and astonishment of all present, who fervently blessed God and the holy bishop, for the miracle which had been thus suddenly effected.

"One day (like a second Elijah) he caused, by the advocacy of his fervent prayers, the fall of a great quantity of rain; thereby replenishing the Meuse and restoring the navigation of the river, which had been completely impeded by the shallowness of its waters, occasioned by a long continued drought.

"Once, during a fire at Maestricht, he boldly entered a burning house, when, on raising his hands to heaven, and making the sign of the cross, the flames were instantaneously subdued and extinguished.

"On another occasion, having learnt that a furious tempest had buried in the raging waves of the sea, a number of persons, who through his mediation, had implored at the time the aid of the Almighty, he addressed a prayer to

the Most High, saying, '*Oh, Lord! who walkedst on the billows of the raging sea, without wetting the soles of thy feet, and who appeasedst the fury of the tempest and the storm, have pity, I beseech thee, on these thy poor servants, now swallowed up in the waves.*' Scarcely had he concluded this fervent prayer, when, to the astonishment and admiration of all beholders, those who had been engulphed in salt waves, were instantaneously delivered from their imminent peril, and returned in safety to the shore. Many, in short, were the similar prodigies performed by the holy St. Hubert.

"Whilst thus continuing to labour for the glory of God, he was divinely informed of the hour of his approaching death; for,—in imitation of the Apostles,—as he superintended a fishery on the river Meuse, and whilst holding a stake for the purpose of fastening the nets, and which a fisherman was driving with a large mallet into the bank of the river; the man, by an awkwardly directed blow, struck the hand of the Saint, and crushed the whole of his fingers,

which caused him so much pain and suffering, that he could by no means obtain any rest.

"At last, weakened and exhausted by his continued sufferings, he finally sunk into a lethargic sleep, during which our Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto him, and saying, "*Thou hast called upon me in thy tribulation, and I have listened to thy prayer*," disclosed to his sight many richly adorned suites of apartments, and pointed out one chamber amongst the rest, saying that it had been expressly prepared for his reception by his Heavenly Father, and that in the course of a year he should be entitled to take possession of the same.

"Being convinced that he would die at the end of the year, he acquainted several of his disciples with the fact, became more assiduous than ever in the service of God; and the better to be prepared for so important an event, he went with the deepest and most unfeigned grief to pray before the relics of St. Lambert; and next proceeding to the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, he chose the spot of his sepulchre,

measured the ground, and caused his grave to be excavated.

" He now from day to day gradually declined and lost his strength; but as the flesh became weaker so the spirit increased in fervency and vigour, to such an extent, that it was constantly wrestling with the enemy of the human species, which had visibly appeared to him;—at last, in the midst of the most fervent prayers, surrounded by his chaplains, his son Floribert, and other priests, he, on the 30th of May, A. D. 727,—after having repeated the symbol of the Apostles, and nearly finished the Dominical oration,—gave up the ghost at the same hour on which our Lord and Saviour expired on the cross.

" As soon as his death became publicly notified, the greatest signs of grief were expressed at the irreparable loss of such a worthy and exemplary pastor; the Monks and Friars went as far as Furnes—the place where he expired,—to bring back to Liege his mortal but sainted remains;—the whole population went in solemn procession to meet them; and after the

most impressive obsequies, celebrated according to the rites of religion, he was interred at the spot chosen by himself, in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter,* in the town of Liege, and before the altar of St. Aubain.

"Even after death the Divine favour was manifestly shewn towards this faithful servant of God, and his sepulchre became celebrated and glorious by numerous miracles,—the fame of which, in the year of our Lord 826, attracted thither Carloman, the brother of King Pepin, who caused the tomb to be opened, when his holy body was not only found entire and in a perfect state of preservation, but emitting a perfumed and agreeable odour; the cheeks florid, the hair as if lately combed, and the appearance altogether that of a man in the prime of life, although he was upwards of seventy years of age at the time of his dissolution.

"The intelligence of these remarkable facts soon spread far and wide, when the Monks of

* This church no longer exists at Liege.

Andain, in the Ardennes, alleging their right to possess such a sainted relic, on the plea of occupying the spot in the immediate vicinity of the 'Converserie,' where the conversion of St. Hubert originally took place, laid their claims before Walcond, the Bishop of Liege; and these being recognised and acknowledged by him, they at last,—with the joint approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff, of Louis the Pious of France, (the son of Charlemagne,) and of the Provincial Council of Aix,—obtained their wish, had the body removed and inhumed within the walls of their own abbey, which, together with the adjacent town, has ever since assumed and retained the appellation of 'St. Hubert.'"*

After partaking of a frugal repast at the "Converserie," and lightly skimming over the old document, containing the foregoing

* As on the 30th of September of each year the office of his "translation" is celebrated at St. Hubert, hence it may be inferred to be the day on which its Monks became depositaries of these holy relics.

life of the Saint; having, moreover, through the medium of a silver key, opened that universal receptacle for all rarities: a huge leather sketching case depending from my side, and safely deposited his saintship into the same, we took leave of the good old "Fermière," who had so kindly administered to our wants, and were soon pacing along over the open desolate and dreary expanse of barren heath and uncultivated "*landes*," which for a few miles intervene between the noble forest, from whence we had lately emerged, and the smiling vale in which lies snugly ensconced the little town of St. Hubert.

The weary traveller, perhaps, seldom meets in the course of his peregrinations with a more cheerless, cold, and uninspiring prospect, than a large expanse of brown barren heath, boundlessly spread out, beneath a lowering autumnal sky, before his lagging footsteps and aching sight. To the observant and moralizing spectator, such a scene presents the faithful though sad emblem of that leaden apathy, of that callous heartlessness, which so oft follows the

ruins of long-cherished hopes—of those sunny day-dreams of our youth, or more sober expectations of riper and maturer years. And as the cold wintry gusts sweep o'er the dark-barren expanse of the wilderness, and mournfully sigh through the now colourless and withered shapes, of what erst were sweet, bright, blooming, and rosy blossoms, on which the bee once did revel and the gay butterfly disport—do those withered flowers, thus sadly wooing that chilling blast, which so rudely drives them before the winds of heaven—do those sad remains of what was once so bright and joyous,—not forcibly recall the bitter withering smile, with which misfortune oft welcomes the cold breath of death, in hopes that it may scatter all its griefs and sorrows on the boundless heath of Eternity?

Had we "Pilgrims" been in a moralizing mood, there would have been abundant scope for such melancholy reflections; as, besides a dark, lowering, and autumnal sky, a driving, drizzling Scotch mist,—which shrouded in its murky folds the dreary expanse before us—

soon effectually damped,—not our spirits,—but thoroughly drenched our outer garments. The former were, however, fully proof against both the inclemency of the season and the sorrowful garb of nature. Health, exercise, and excitement are wonderful antidotes against the blue devils; and if to this be added a good appetite, lately gratified with the simple, though substantial, fare of the "Converserie," and diluted with a couple of "petits verres d'eau de vie," to keep out the raw damp air,—to say nothing of the amusing conversation of the "Botanist,"—the reader will readily credit that the above were "after-thoughts;" nor did they presume to intrude their unwelcome presence, as we now rapidly approached the desired goal, the object of our "Pélérinage."

Gaily, and in joyous parlance, did we toil across that sad and apparently never-ending "Bruyère," or heath; till at last—arriving suddenly on the verge of what appeared to be a boundless table-land of sterile barrenness—the valley, the church, and little town of St. Hubert suddenly burst upon our view; and a downward

sweep of the road soon led us under the massive, though now decayed, moss-grown, and fast crumbling garden-walls of the former Monks of St. Andain.

In all our various peregrinations, wherever we have happened to come in actual contact with these gentry, or, as in the present case, to stumble on one of their abandoned "lairs," —whether such an event hath occurred on the sunny shores of Calabria, the barren and naked rock of Malta, or the once inquisitorial territory of Spain,—amongst the fertile, terraced slopes of Lebanon, or the barren hills of Judea,—we have ever observed signs of the greatest regard manifested by the holy brotherhood towards the creature-comforts of life—the ease and luxuries of this sublunary world; and, amidst all their fasts, penances, vigils, and mortifications of the flesh, the traveller will always remark that a well-furnished kitchen-garden, an abundantly provided larder, and well-stocked cellar, are the chief characteristic attributes of this unctuous, fat, and useless animal of the veriest drone genus, which—

thanks to the improvements of an enlightened age—is fast disappearing from the bee-hive of civilized society, nor any longer allowed idly and luxuriously to wallow in and consume those sweets, to accumulate which it contributes not one iota of toil or labour.

* * * *

Scarcely had we reached the above monastic remains, at a short distance from the town, than we were beset by a host of old women and children, who, in our apparent quality of "Pélérins," proffered for sale numberless crosses, rosaries, and little brass bugle-horns; all of which, they assured us, possessed the most undoubted and specific virtues in removing or preventing that fearful malady, of which we were supposed to be either actually bearing the germs; or to have travelled thus far, effectually to guard against, at any future period of our lives.

The importunities of these miserable old wretches were most tormenting, and almost capable of driving a man to that state which they averred their relics possessed the power

of averting. At last, to get rid of this annoyance, we purchased a handful of brass St. Huberts,—dogs, bugles, stags, and beads,—and cramming them all into the universal leathern receptacle above mentioned, elbowed our way through the crowd; and proceeding to the "soi-disant" Hôtel de Majerotte, the only—and therefore best house of entertainment in the place—speedily divested our dripping bodies of their wet coverings, and having replaced the same from the contents of our knapsacks, afterwards went to the residence of my companion's friend, Dr. D——, the Esculapius of St. Hubert, and, moreover, its potent, grave, and reverend Burgomaistre.

The worthy Doctor gave us a cordial welcome, and laughed heartily at the recital of the scene which marked the first acquaintance of the "Botanist" and myself; but whenever any doubts were expressed as to the efficacy of St. Hubert's miraculous cure of madness, he seriously averred his entire belief in the same; stated that, during his many years' practice at this place, thousands of patients

had been through his hands; that although it was certainly true that some few had succumbed under the effects of that dreadful malady, yet he attributed this entirely to their want of faith—all such as really possessed that indispensable requisite, invariably returning from the pilgrimage sound in body and sane in mind.

Many were the anecdotes—too long and prosy to bear repetition—which the worthy Doctor recounted to support his argument, in the course of which I learnt that the average number of pilgrims who yearly visit St. Hubert, amounts usually to a thousand; but of these the greater number are only "precautionary" devotees,—that is to say, those who, under the firm belief of averting the malady at any future period of their lives, come here in anticipation, brimful of faith—touch the "Sainte Etole"—and on having a ring, or any other wearing apparel, blessed by the officiating priest at the abbey, depart fully satisfied and convinced that they will never be subject to the disease.

The other class consists of those who actually *have* been bitten by a rabid animal, or at least by one *supposed* to be in that state. To such the following treatment is prescribed:—

After taking the communion and confessing, the priest makes a slight incision in the forehead of the patient, places in the wound a few threads of silk taken from the "Sainte Etole," or holy scarf—the heavenly gift of the Blessed Virgin—places a bandage over the part; and, on the repetition of sundry prayers and formulæ, the hydrophobiac is enjoined, during the performance of the "Neuvaine," or probationary period of nine days, to follow implicitly the ensuing directions:—

1. To confess, and take the communion during nine successive days.

2. To sleep alone; either in clean sheets, or fully clothed.

3. To drink out of a glass or other vessel, but on no account to stoop and drink either at a fountain or running brook.

4. The patient may drink any kind of wine mixed with water.

5. He may eat white or brown bread; the flesh of a male pig of one year old, or upwards; capons or fowls, also of that age; fish having scales, such as herrings, carp, &c., and hard eggs,—all of which must be eaten cold.

6. The hair is not to be combed during forty days.

7. The tenth day, a priest should take off the bandage, which is burnt, and the ashes thereof cast to the winds of heaven.

8. The "Fête" of St. Hubert, which happens on the 3rd of November, must be regularly observed every year.

9. At which period, should the patient have been previously bitten so as to draw blood, he or she must fast during three days, but without being obliged to return to St. Hubert.

10. A respite or delay of from forty to sixty days can be given to such persons, as may have been wounded or bitten so as to draw blood, or are otherwise infected by mad animals.

The Doctor, as well as the worthy Almoner,

who happened to be present, both averred that, by strictly observing the above treatment—in addition to the requisite article of faith—the patient was sure of an ultimate cure; and on my asking the former, how, in that case it happened, as he admitted, that several people had died of the disease under his hands, he replied: that they had either neglected some of the above observances, or had not placed sufficient reliance on the efficacious interposition of the Saint. However, by dint of cross-questioning, I found that all those on whom a cure was supposed to have been effected, although they might have been bitten by a rabid animal, had not, up to the time of their arrival at the shrine, *shewn* any actual symptoms of hydrophobia; whereas the operation of the "Coupure," or incision, was never performed on the unfortunates who, at the end of their pilgrimage, bore unequivocal signs of the dreadful malady. I hence came to the conclusion, that his saintship cheaply earned his reputation by administering cures where there was no disease; whilst he was

very chary of compromising his fame by practising on such as were in real want of aid and assistance. However, these heterodox opinions were scouted by all present; and on my expressing a wish to undergo the operation of the "Coupure," I was told in very plain terms, that the thing,—with such an unbelieving heretic,—would not only be impossible, but actually sacrilegious; and I was obliged to abandon the idea of having even my glove or ring touched by the "Sainte Etole," and blessed—as a preventive or antidote—by "sandalled priest," or "hooded friar."*

* * * * *

* Although in the case of the priest and doctor, it was evidently the interest of both to play into each other's hands, and profess the most implicit faith in St. Hubert, I was subsequently surprised to find how general was the belief of the efficacy of his interposition, with all classes in the Ardennes, more particularly amongst the peasantry and lower orders, who, not content with touching the "Sainte Etole" themselves, often, by a similar process insured against the "Evil Eye," not only their garments, but personal property of every description—bales of goods, and waggon-loads of merchandise.

There is no doubt in all this, much of priest-craft and mummery; yet the tendency of its moral effect is, perhaps, in many cases beneficial. We all know how powerfully the mind acts on many diseases of the human frame, and that the very belief in the efficacy of a cure may in some cases promote the cure itself; whilst the mental powers,—racked with the morbid depression of spirits caused by the mere apprehension of such a fearful malady,—may, by constantly brooding over its terrors, at last shake tottering Reason on her throne, and conjure up an incubus, which then striking the wretched sufferer,—if not with hydrophobia itself,—infects him either with raving madness, moping despondency, or helpless idiocy!

Amongst the long list of "charlatanerie" enumerated in the above mode of treatment, are one or two articles, whose object is evidently to withdraw the attention of the patient from observing any material change which may have taken place in personal look

or appearance, and thereby causing the imagination to dwell on the real or supposed increase of the symptoms of disease;—such are the prohibitions against "drinking at a fountain or running brook," whose clear surface might reflect in his own eyes, the distorted, wan, or emaciated countenance of the sufferer, and heighten the terrors of his already deplorable condition; and again,—during the period of forty days, that against "combing the hair," which latter operation would necessarily demand the use of a looking-glass; whilst the "sine qua non" of implicit faith, must act powerfully in inculcating the same, and facilitating the *real* cure of what perhaps may "de facto" be originally an *imaginary*, though, from its effects, no less awful visitation, than if based on undoubted reality.

* * * * *

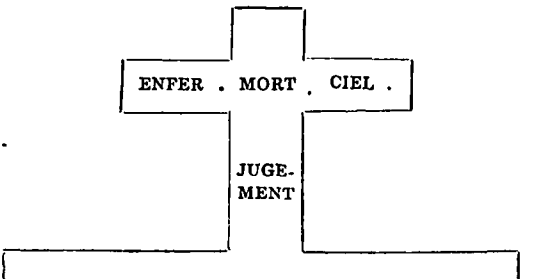
Although, during our residence at St. Hubert, the opportunity did not offer itself of witnessing the "coupure," or incisive mode, on such persons as had actually been bitten by rabid

animals, we saw the "precautionary" ceremony performed, of blessing articles belonging to such as wished to guard against any possible future contingency.

Notwithstanding the disgrace I had incurred, by the expression of such heterodox opinions on the subject of St. Hubert's wonderful cures, allowances being made for my heretical creed, both the Doctor and Almoner were unbounded in their kindness and civility, and took the first opportunity of conducting me over that venerable pile containing the last mortal remains of the great Patron Saint.

On entering the Abbey we were struck with the unexpected grandeur of a building placed in such a remote and little-known situation, but which strongly reminded me, by its style of architecture and dimensions, of the noble Cathedral of Winchester. Scarcely had we crossed the threshold, when those marks of superstition or priestcraft peculiar to the spot, immediately met the eye; for, on the left hand side of the principal entrance, in a small space enclosed with an iron paling, was planted a

cross, of which, with its inscription, the following is a representation:—


ENFER . MORT . CIEL .
JUGE-
MENT
MONSEIGNEUR ACCORDE UNE INDULGENCE DE 40 JOURS A CEUX QUI RECITERONT TROIS "PATER," TROIS "AVE," ET UN "GLORIA PATRI," DEVANT CETTE CROIX DE MISSION.

Proceeding up a spacious nave, on entering the chancel, we were struck with the most beautiful specimen of carved oak work I ever beheld; nine compartments of which on the left hand side represented, in elaborately wrought alto-relievo, the life and actions of St. Benedict; whilst opposite were recorded those of the great St. Hubert:—his first "début" at the court of Pepin—his marriage with the beautiful Floribana — the miraculous conversion and repentance—the gift of the keys;

next, habited in the episcopal robes—mounted on a noble charger, and bearing crosier and mitre, he is seen putting a stop to carnage and warfare, both emblematically represented. The seventh and eighth partitions contain a representation of the Saint in his own peculiar vocation, of expelling the evil spirit of madness from one afflicted with hydrophobia, and receiving the "Sancta Stola" from heaven; whilst the ninth, or last concluding act, contains his death and translation to glory.

These relievoes, of nearly the size of life, are all executed with great spirit and delicacy, more particularly that in which is shewn the "Conversion," where a noble stag is seen at bay, with a crucifix between his antlers; whilst the astonished hunter,—struck with awe at this marked instance of divine interposition,—has thrown himself from his palfrey, and kneels in fervent adoration before the emblem of salvation:

> "Around his neck his horn is hung,
> His hanger in his belt is slung;
> Before his feet his bloodhounds lie:
> And, 'twere not for his *fixed* eye,—

Whose *wooden* glance no heart can brook,—
As true a huntsman doth he look,
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever halloo'd to a hound."

Statues, images, and representations of the "stag," that divine instrument of the conversion, were thickly scattered throughout the holy edifice, through which we were carelessly sauntering about, when informed that a peasant was then in the act of undergoing the "precautionary" ordeal of having some personal property blessed and touched with the "Sainte Etole," in order to avert madness at any future period.

The process was simple enough: the credulous countryman then applying to the guardian powers of St. Hubert, was reverently kneeling before the altar of a small chapel in the body of the cathedral, whilst the priest mumbled something over his head;* and then carefully opening a small box containing what appeared to be the fragment of a silken riband, caused the pilgrim to touch it with a ring; when the

* Vide Appendix.

latter went away perfectly satisfied in the belief of being from henceforth safe from that dreadful infliction—hydrophobia.

* * * * *

It was my intention to have remained at St. Hubert until the celebration of the "fête" yearly held in honour of its patron, on the 3rd of November; however, pressing and unexpected business requiring an immediate return to England, I reluctantly took my departure—found myself in a few days once more snugly ensconced in the "Author's Study," where the Reader hath already been introduced; and whilst surrounded by those sylvan trophies before enumerated—which tended powerfully to recall the past—I spent the ensuing dreary months of winter in preparing for publication, the foregoing chapters of "Wild Sports, in Europe, Asia, and Africa."

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER V. PAGE 122.

FREQUENT mention has been made by nearly every traveller, of the numbers of the lizard tribe met with in Syria; however, I only remember seeing one or two species. That alluded to as basking on the grey rocks of Mount Lebanon is common to the most distant countries of the far East, and is known in India as the "bloodsucker," a name derived from its appearance more than from any destructive quality it may possess. From the constant changes of colour it is subject to, this little animal might not unaptly be classed with the chameleon.

It must be the same described by Buffon as the "dragon," of which at page 60, vol. 15, of his Natural History, he gives the following account:—

"The dragon has been magnified into a terrible animal by authors of all ages, and to whom the most dreadful destructive powers have been applied: happily, however, no such animal, at present, at least, is known to exist; and the only one of that name, is a little harmless "flying" lizard that

preys upon insects, and even seems to embellish the forest with its beauty. Fable and superstition so long dwelt upon the description of the death-dealing dragon, that even to this day the uncivilized people of Africa and America traverse the forests with terror, lest they should fall into its power, and scarcely a savage is found that does not talk of serpents of an immoderate length, flying away with a camel or rhinoceros, and who is capable of destroying mankind with a single glance!"

This account, with the exception of the *flying* part of it, agrees with the appearance of the Indian "bloodsucker."

The bloodsucker is also mentioned as follows in Lalla Rookh:—"While Fadladeen, besides the spiritual comfort he derived from a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Saint from whom the valley is named, had opportunities of gratifying, in a small way, his taste for victims, by putting to death some hundreds of those unfortunate little lizards, which all pious Mussulmans make it a point to kill;—taking for granted, that the manner in which the creature hangs its head, is meant as a mimicry of the attitude in which the faithful say their prayers!"

CHAPTER V. PAGE 137.

IN a work professedly of a "sporting" nature, a few words may not be misplaced relating to that noble animal the horse;—that constant companion

of man in the pleasures of the chase, the perils of war, and the toils of agriculture. The arid and sandy plains of the East have, from the days of Job, been celebrated for the state of perfection to which the race of this splendid creature attains,—and in Syria, on the very confines, as it were, of the peculiar domains of the horse:—the Deserts of Arabia,—I expected to find him faultless in shape and form, and perfect in every quality. Great was therefore my disappointment, after reading with delight Lamartine's "poetical" account of the Syrian "khiel" (horses), to find them, in every respect, below even the inferior description of Arab, I had been accustomed to see in the plains of Hindostan.

To the reader, who may not have perused the French author's glowing and beautifully written account of his "Voyage en Orient," the following translation of that part of the work relating to "horse flesh" in Syria, may not be unacceptable.

He had been on a visit to the Emir Beschir, at his palace at Btiddeen, and on the occasion of inspecting the Grand Prince's stud, says:—

"From thence we went with one of the attendants to visit the court-yards and stables, where the Prince's magnificent Arab stallions were 'chained up.' To form an idea of the Arab horse, it is requisite to have visited the stables of Damascus, or those of the Emir Beschir.

"This splendid animal, transplanted from his native soil and accustomed habits, into our cold cli-

mates, and the shade and solitude of our stables,—loses his beauty, his sweetness of disposition, and picturesque forms. He should be seen at the entrance of the wild Arab's tent,—now stooping his head and shaking his flowing mane, like a moving parasol,—whilst with his purple-tipped tail he sweeps his shining sides—polished like brass or silver;—he should be seen clothed in his brilliant trappings, resplendent with pearls and golden embroidery, decorated with a silken head-stall of blue or crimson, with tingling and sonorous ornaments, falling from his forehead to his nostrils,—and with which he occasionally conceals or discovers, at every movement of his neck, the inflamed, immense, intelligent, soft, and proud orb of his prominent eye;—above all, he must be seen as we then beheld him, in a collective number of two or three hundred,—some lying on the ground, some fixed by iron rings to the cords which crossed the stable yards;—others at freedom, 'springing over,' at a single bound, the files of camels which came in their way. Some, led by young negro slaves, richly habited in scarlet robes, and resting their heads in a caressing attitude on the shoulders of these children of Ethiopia: others, at liberty and free from bonds, playing together like colts in a meadow—rearing against each other—rubbing each other's foreheads, or mutually licking their clear, smooth, and silvery coats. Owing to our European costume and strange language, they all looked

on us with inquisitive and uneasy attention, but they soon became familiar, and then gracefully extended their necks to the caresses of our patting hands.

"To any one who may not have witnessed it, the 'transparency and changes of physiognomy' of these horses passes belief. All their 'thoughts' are expressed in their eyes, and in the 'convulsive' movements of their cheeks, of their lips, and their nostrils, as markedly as the impressions of the soul on the countenance of a child. On approaching them for the first time, they made gestures and 'grimaces' of repugnance and curiosity, quite similar to those which a susceptible man would have expressed at the sight of an unexpected and unpleasant object. Our 'language,' above all, struck and astonished them much, and their surprise and uneasiness were strongly marked by the movement of their ears, either pricked forward or suddenly thrown back. I admired particularly several mares of inestimable price, reserved for the use of the Emir himself," &c.

Now as to the *composition* of the original, there can be no difference of opinion; it is beautifully written; but when the author talks of seeing his winged Pegasi leap over "files of camels"—and descants on their expressive "physiognomy" and "knowledge of language," why to say the least of it, he is much too far carried away by his poetic enthusiasm to be credited by any plain prose-

going reader, and particularly by one who may happen to have seen what he gives such a glowing description of.

The old Emir Beschir, it is well known, had a splendid stud—of which it is very probable, some of the horses appeared at the "casting of the Djereed," described in the above pages,—and, although on that and other occasions I have seen fine horses in Syria, they are not to be compared to the real Nedjdi Arab, or even to the inferior animal of that race exported to India.

Lamartine, likewise, encourages the common delusion, of the kindness and care with which horses are treated in this part of the world, and of the consequent attachment existing between them and their masters. This *may* be the case in the Deserts of Arabia,—but in Syria nothing can be more at variance with facts than such a supposition.

This noble animal is often, after a long and toilsome journey, neither groomed, nor even unsaddled. For days he is allowed to wear without relief this heavy Eastern appendage, which, when removed frequently displays the horribly lacerated and galled state of the back;—he is in very good luck if, after toiling from morning to night, a few handsful of barley are put in a bag fastened to his nose, or, more frequently, thrown before him on the dusty ground,—and although he is allowed to drink his fill, it is only at such times as chance brings him across a brook or fountain, when opportunity is taken

by the forelock, and he is allowed to imbibe the pure element "ad libitum," without any regard to the heated state in which he may previously have been.

During my residence in Syria, the proper care of my horses was what gave me most trouble, as the saïces or grooms could never overcome their old habits of carelessness and neglect,—as a punishment for which, many is the good stick I have broken over their backs!

CHAPTER V. PAGE 140.

THE roads in Syria—more particularly in the mountainous parts of the country, are of such a wretched description—so thickly covered with rocky fragments and detached masses of stone; sometimes running in devious goat tracks on the rugged sides of precipitous hills; at others along dry and stony water-courses, or through the beds of raging torrents—that it is only matter of surprise how horses can ever maintain their footing on such apparently impracticable paths; in crossing which, however, our mode of shoeing would be little or no protection to their feet, and it is consequently found necessary to cover the whole of the lower part of the hoof with a flat plate of iron, having only a small aperture in the centre.

* * * * *

Besides the chivalrous sport of the Djereed, in

more peaceable times the knightly pastime of Falconry is much in vogue amidst those wild mountain regions. Burckhardt, who visited this country in 1810, with more opportunities of observation than occur to the generality of travellers, remarks of the Emir Beschir:*—"That he keeps about fifty horses, of which a dozen are of prime quality; his only amusement is sporting with the hawk and the pointer."

Since that period, until the time of his expulsion from the "Mountain," in 1840, the Emir greatly increased his stud, until he at last monopolized nearly every horse of any value in the country. A recent French author gives the following picture of the splendid establishment kept up by the "Grand Prince:—"The only one of his family and of the high functionaries of the states of Mehemet Ali: the old Emir Beschir, had kept up his military establishment. Nevertheless, since the arrival of Ibrahim in Syria, it had been reduced to six hundred horsemen, and to four or five hundred infantry. The splendour of his hospitality at Btiddeen, his magnificent stables, and hunting establishments, strongly contrasted with the simplicity of Ibrahim Pasha. Rich or poor,—whether stranger or native of the country,—who, together with his horses and attendants, might arrive at Btiddeen, was sure,

* This alludes to the old Emir Beschir, who in 1840 was sent to Malta, and subsequently allowed to go to Constantinople, where, by constantly intriguing, he is supposed to have contributed his share to the troubles which have lately disturbed the unfortunate and doomed district of Lebanon.

as long as detained there either by business or pleasure, to be entertained with the most unbounded hospitality. An assemblage of two hundred men and horses thus daily took place, who were all subsisted at the expense of the Prince.

"He alone had preserved in Syria the old feudal amusement: the chase of the partridge by means of falcons; and every year, during the months of January and February, hawking matches took place with a numerous retinue, and in a style of truly regal splendour—a thousand or twelve hundred peasants crowned the heights in a radius of three miles from the spot chosen by the Emir as his rendezvous. There, seated on a divan, smoking his chibouque, and surrounded by his relations and officers, all respectfully standing in his presence, he held on his wrist a falcon, whilst a dozen other hooded ones rested on perches by his side. As soon as the signal for the chase was given, the beaters, with loud cries, gradually diminished the circle formed around the Emir, beating at the same time the underwood to cause the partridges to rise; the instant a bird was perceived, although, maybe, at an enormous distance, the Emir let go the falcon he held on his wrist. At the same moment fifty horsemen and as many dogs, sprung over the intervening hills and valleys to seize on the quarry, who, in the claws of its captor, might now be seen struggling and rapidly falling from an immense height to the ground. This chase, in

which the Emir sometimes captured as many as two hundred partridges during the day, presented a most magnificent spectacle, greatly enhanced by the number of horsemen, the beauty of their steeds, and magnificence of the costumes, whilst the noise and tumult were repeated by a hundred echoes from the surrounding heights."

It never was the good fortune of the author of these pages to behold one of these magnificent "parties de chasse;" but whatever may have been the admiration caused by the princely style of such amusements; every sentiment of a pleasurable nature must have been strongly counterbalanced, on reflecting what innumerable instances of cruelty, extortion, and oppression daily took place, to enable this "Old Man of the Mountain" to keep up these almost regal and sumptuous establishments; when whole families of industrious and hardy mountaineers wasted the toil of days and weeks, and were ground down by want and famine, to gratify the whim of a despot, and the death of each poor partridge had to be lamented by the tears and groans of hundreds of human beings!

CHAPTER VI. PAGE 146.

THE name of this fair apparition was "Zuleïka Shehab," of the family of the Grand Prince of Mount Lebanon. In addition to the personal attractions of which the reader has been allowed

a slight glimpse, this lady possessed all the heroic qualities becoming the daughter of a warlike mountain chief, and which, on a subsequent occasion, she had an opportunity of displaying.

During the sanguinary contests which occurred between the Maronites and Druses towards the latter part of the year 1841, and which deluged the whole Mountain in blood, the latter tribe, after a successful attack on their enemies, advanced from Dhair-el-Kamar, towards the neighbourhood of Beyrout, putting everything to fire and the sword. Amongst other villages which they burnt was that of El Haded, the residence of the Emir Solyman Shehab and his family, who were obliged to have recourse to a precipitate flight, during which it was remembered that sundry important papers, with a considerable quantity of specie in gold, had been left in one of the family coffers.

The Princess Zuleïka immediately volunteered to go in quest of the abandoned treasure; and arming herself with a brace of pistols and a scymitar, boldly galloped back towards her father's palace, which she reached as the Druses entered the other extremity of the village. In the confusion of the moment, not being able to find the key of the "strong box," she broke it open with a hatchet, took possession of what she required, and fighting her way back through flames and foes, vaulted on her steed, and rejoined in safety her alarmed and retiring friends!

Chapter VI. Page 167.

"Although the latter abound with every species of game—wild boar, gazelles, wolves, jackals, foxes, and water-fowl of all kinds, the mountains of Syria are singularly deficient of sylvan population," &c.

Since the days of Scripture the sylvan population of the land of Canaan appears to have decreased in the same proportion as its inhabitants, the holy writings making frequent mention of animals now no longer to be met with. The *Lions* of the valley of the Jordan appear, notwithstanding Mr. Lamartine's mysterious allusions, to have long since disappeared; and the votary of the chase would now in vain look amongst the hills of Judea for the *Yachmur*, or fallow deer; the *Akko*, or wild goat; the *Thau*, (supposed to be the bison,) the *Pygang*, and the *Zomer*; whilst the Desert has likewise been abandoned by the wild ass and the unicorn, the "fiery flying serpent," the "cockatrice," and "dragon;" and, in the present day, the roving jackal or the fleet gazelle, alone leave a transitory print of their footsteps on its barren and burnt up surface.

The breed of horses used in the time of Solomon appears to have been brought chiefly from Egypt, which now only furnishes those of a most inferior description; and the prohibition mentioned at Deut. xvii. 16, not to multiply horses, appears to have had for its object to prevent any unnecessary

communication with the land of Misraim. That Solomon infringed this law, we see by 1 Kings, iv. 26:—"And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen."

That they were then likewise fed in a similar manner with the Syrian horses of the present day, appears from one of the succeeding verses of the same chapter:—"Barley also, and straw, (probably chopped straw, or *tibbin*,) for the horses and dromedaries, (meaning, it is supposed, mules,) brought they unto the place where the officers were—every man according to his charge."

CHAPTER VI. PAGE 169.

AT page 124 of Lamartine's "Voyage en Orient," we have the following passage:—"Les Arabes nous avertissent de ne pas marcher sans nos armes, et de ne nous avancer qu'avec précaution, parceque ces épais taillis sont le repaire de quelques 'lions,' de panthères, et de chats-tigres. Nous n'en vîmes pas, mais nous entendîmes souvent dans l'ombre du fourré des mugissements et des bruits semblables à ceux que font les grands animaux en perçant les profondeurs des bois."

The fact of lions having been found in the valley of the Jordan is certainly mentioned in Scripture;

but their existence at the present day, together with that of panthers, of which Mr. Lamartine appears to insinuate the fact, was probably only in the imaginations of the scoundrels who acted as his guides, and who were, no doubt, anxious to enhance the merit of their services, by making their willing employer persuaded of dangers which did not exist. The "mugissements" which he himself heard, together with other mysterious noises, proceeded most probably from the cattle which graze in great numbers amidst the thick "nebek" bushes with which the plain of the Jordan is in many places covered.

The only animals which fixed our attention in our progress across the "Ghor," were numerous pretty little creatures, apparently of the rat species, of a bright colour, and with long bushy tails, who, on our approach, immediately took refuge in the many holes with which the ground appeared perforated. In these, however, we could not trace the slightest resemblance to the "kings of the forest."

CHAPTER VI. PAGE 183.

DURING the severe gale which visited the coast of Syria on the 2nd and 3rd of December, 1840, H.M.S. Zebra was driven ashore in the Bay of Acre, near Caïpha, where her officers experienced, I understand, great civility and attention from that

hospitable old gentleman, Catafago, who has been honourably mentioned by nearly every traveller visiting Syria for the last twenty years.

Catafago's family came originally from Trieste. His father settled at Smyrna, and mercantile trans actions brought the son to the coast of Syria, where he has adopted the native dress, taken unto himself as a wife a fair Syrio-Greek; has now a large and fine family, composed of a son and some very pretty daughters; and lives in hospitable affluence and ease at Caïpha, from whence, during the heats of summer, he retires to his country-house at Nazareth.

Catafago for some time occupied the post of Russian consul at Acre or Caïpha, and when in this official capacity, used to wear such an enormous cocked-hat, that it became customary for the Arabs to swear by the "Bournetta" of Catafago. He has, however, now donned the large white turban, with which he is a very handsome representation of a fine-looking old Oriental—good-humour beaming on his jolly countenance, and good-living in his portly person.

CHAPTER VII. PAGE 198.

THESE cavalcades, or rather donkey-*ades* of the women of Cairo, are well described in a very clever and ably written work called "Lane's Egypt and

Modern Egyptians." The "himar," or donkey of Alexandria or Cairo, is very different from the slow, stubborn, and pig-headed brute, which crops the thistles on our commons. Active, docile, and enduring, it appears to belong to quite another race; and to imbibe any sort of respect for the long-eared tribe—the "pons asinorum" of the naturalist should be over the land of Pharaoh—to the great city of El Musr.

CHAPTER VII. PAGE 199.

Too much cannot be said in commendation of all Mr. Waghorn's efforts and exertions to establish the overland communication with India, in which he has succeeded, after toiling for years against numberless vexations and difficulties—at last happily surmounted; and as the long-exiled Indian traveller returns thus speedily to his native shores,—whilst stretching his weary frame on one of the comfortable couches of the hotel at Cairo, he cannot fail to recall with feelings of gratitude the name of "Waghorn."

CHAPTER VII. PAGE 218.

THE increased communication by steam and the overland passage to India have now so completely made a high road of Egypt, that it at present swarms with travellers of every description, and in

a short time an excursion to the Pyramids will be no more thought of than formerly was a trip to Boulogne or Calais.

Already are those venerable relics of antiquity, the "Mummy pits," beginning to suffer from their vicinity to the great thoroughfare; and the most secret and sacred of their hallowed sanctuaries are being fast laid open to the broad glare of day by the numerous Arabs, who now make it a regular and profitable trade to supply antiquity hunters, from this hitherto inexhaustible source.

In the neighbourhood of the mummy pits, and of the old ruined pyramids of Dashour and Saccarah, we found numerous foxes and jackals. Hares were likewise plentiful in the thorny thickets bordering the cultivated grounds and the Desert; whilst in the latter, flocks of gazelles were frequently to be seen. We had not, however, an opportunity of meeting, during our excursion, with either the "cow-antelope" or the hyæna, both of which are said to be common in this part of the Desert. My friend the Doctor had one of the former, in a half-domestic state: it was of whitish colour, rather higher and considerably stouter built than the antelope of India, with the horns of the latter, and the head and tail of the common ox; with which and the deer species, it appears to form an intermediate link.

Marshal Marmont, in his work on Egypt, mentions the hyæna, and gives the following relation

of the manner in which it is caught alive by the Arabs:—

"It appears that its retreat is generally either in some cave or excavation, and when this has been discovered, a Bedouin, after passing the sliding noose of a rope over his left arm, wraps up the latter in thick folds of cloth, and then, armed with a stick, follows the hyæna into his den. When the animal finds he cannot retreat, he becomes furious, and makes a desperate attack on his antagonist, who, whilst he thrusts his protected arm into his jaws, at the same time passes the noose over his head. On a given signal, the end of the rope is seized by other people waiting outside, and in an instant the astonished and half-throttled hyæna is gasping in the midst of his exulting captors."

During our "day or two in the Desert of Lybia," amongst the feathered tribes, we saw numerous specimens of the large red-legged, black and white stork; a very few of the "Sacred Ibis," which is neither more nor less than the common grey curlew; some of those small and graceful storks, known in India as the white "Paddy bird;" and innumerable quantities of doves, in the date groves and mimosa thickets bordering the cultivation; but we did not get a glimpse of the pelicans mentioned by Savary, though we might perhaps have done so, had we proceeded a little more to the South, to the famed Lake of Mœris.

A rhinocéros, a giraffe, lions, and ostriches, are

to be seen at Cairo, captives from the Desert, and betokening an approach to the great and boundless wilderness of Central Africa.

CHAPTER VIII. PAGE 227.

IN our gallops over the Desert in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, I do not remember ever meeting either with the gazelle or the hyæna. Foxes, however, are very numerous, and afforded us some capital runs.

The sandy grounds of Ramlah, about seven miles to the east of the city, abound with a curious little animal, peculiar, I believe, to this part of the world, called the Jāboa: we denominated it the kangaroo rat, from its being so complete a miniature representation of the latter animal. It burrows in the sand, and seldom strays to any distance from its earth, which it regains when surprised by an approaching footstep, with astonishing celerity; the disproportionate length of its hind legs enabling it to clear ten or twelve yards at a single bound; and I have seen a horse kept for a short distance at a good hand gallop in pursuit of one of these little animals, which in size is less than the common rat.

I sent to England some jāboas which were procured from the Desert in the vicinity of Alexandria. They thrived very well, and became quite tame.

During the winter they remained coiled up in their cage, amidst cotton and fine hay, apparently in a constant state of sleep; but when put out into the room they immediately displayed their wonted activity to such a degree, that it was then no easy job again to effect their capture; in doing this, on one occasion, two of them were killed, and the third lived but a short time afterwards to lament the fate of his brethren in exile.

Amongst the things that creep, the vicinity of Alexandria abounds with land tortoises, chameleons, and fine sea-turtle, enormous specimens of the latter being frequently brought from the Bay of Aboukir, and sold for a couple of dollars apiece.

The heaps of pottery and mounds of rubbish outside the walls of the city, are rendered very insecure to ride over, from being in many places completely perforated with holes, made by a destructive little animal called Pharaoh's rat. Amidst these mounds may also be seen, basking in the sun, in great numbers, the fierce-looking lizard, elsewhere mentioned as the "bloodsucker."

Like Malta, the country about Alexandria is, in the spring and autumn, visited by large quantities of quail, in their periodical emigrations; and their appearance is always the signal for a greater variety of "Cockney Sportsmen" than were ever mustered at Blackheath or Epping.

Mounted on donkeys, armed with all manner of projectiles, duly rigged out in sporting costumes—

shooting jackets and gaiters—every merchant's clerk here fancies himself a "Cacciadore," and proudly sallies forth on a Sunday morning to the plains of Ramlah, where numerous sanguinary deeds are committed, not only on the quail tribe, but on every unoffending lark, houpou, or unfortunate dove, whom these ardent votaries of Nimrod can possibly get a pot-shot at; and towards evening, dozens of these gay foresters may be seen returning through the Damietta gates, and proudly displaying to the wondering Arabs whole strings of these noble trophies of the chase!

Besides the periodical visits of the quail, the rock partridge, plover, and bustard florican, are sometimes met with in the sands along the Eastern coasts; whilst during the winter, I understand that a good bag of *flamingoes*, snipe, and wild duck, frequently repay a day of splashing and fag amidst the low grounds bordering Lake Mœreotis and the Canal.

CHAPTER VIII. PAGE 241.

WHAT is here peculiarly called the "Barrieh" is that part of uncultivated ground immediately bordering the rich belt along the banks of the Canal and the Nile. It produces a few thorny plants and scanty herbage, sufficient for the maintenance of the camels and sheep of the Bedouins, whose black

tents are here and there dotted over its desolate surface.

These tribes appear to be stationary. They subsist by means of their flocks, and a small tax paid to them by the Fellahs in whose neighbourhood they may be, for the protection of whose fields they become answerable; besides this a trifling gratuity is granted by the Pasha, who has all these sons of Ishmael in his pay, and thus secures their goodwill and assistance when required.

CHAPTER VIII. PAGE 255.

DURING the disturbances in the Mountains of Lebanon, in the spring of 1840, when the inhabitants attempted to throw off the yoke of Mehemet Ali,—a short time previous to the landing of the Allies on the coast,—several of the most influential Sheikhs and Emirs of the Mountain, being entrapped by Ibrahim Pasha, were embarked at Acre, and sent to Alexandria, from whence they were immediately despatched, loaded with chains and every indignity, to the remote province of Sennar, beyond the Cataracts of the Nile, to end their days in those gold mines, to the working of which Mehemet Ali had lately been directing his attention.

In the treaty concluded by Commodore Napier with the Pasha of Egypt, towards the latter end of November 1840, when he appeared before Alexandria with six sail of the line—one of the first

articles of the Convention was, the immediate liberation of the Emirs and Sheikhs of Mount Lebanon. However, as His Highness appeared rather dilatory in the fulfilment of this part of his agreement, the author was sent on a mission to Egypt, to see this portion of the treaty carried into effect; and in one of the Pasha's ships he safely re-conveyed to Beyrout, all these Mountain Chiefs and their attendants, to the number of seventy persons. He was subsequently sent on a second special mission to Alexandria, to take back to their country the Syrian soldiers, who had formed part of the Egyptian army in its retreat from Damascus.

After numerous vexatious delays, and a prolonged residence at Alexandria, he succeeded in the object of his mission; but, on taking back to their homes the first detachments of these poor people, ill health, contracted on the coast of Syria, obliged him to return to England; and eventually to retire on half-pay.

CHAPTER IX. PAGE 317.

The following is a copy of the form of prayer employed on the presentation of a Pilgrim at the shrine of St. Hubert:—

Forma servanda a Sacerdote in applicatione Sacræ Stolæ ad infirmos.

A Sacerdos cum stolâ dicatur hæc suprà

patientem genuflexum ante altare faciendo signum crucis.

V. Sit nomen Dei benedictum.—*R.* Ex hoc et usque in sæculum.

V. Κυριε ελεησον.—*R.* Χριστε ελεησον.

V. Κυριε ελεησον. Pater noster. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem, Sancte Huberti.—*R.* Ora pro nobis.

V. Salvum fac servum tuum vel ancillam tuam. —*R.* Deus meus, sperantem in Te.

V. Domine exaudi orationem meam.—*R.* Et clamor meus ad Te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.—*R.* Et cum spiritu tuo.

V. Oremus.

Deus qui culpâ offenderis, pœnitentiâ placaris, preces populi tui supplicati propitius respice et flagella tuæ iracundiæ quæ pro peccatis nostris meremur averte, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

V. Dominus vobiscum.—*R.* Et cum spiritu tuo.

Oremus.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, salus æterna credentium, exaudi nos intercedente Huberto pro famulo tuo (vel famulâ tuâ) infirmo pro quo (vel pro quâ, imploramus auxilium misericordiæ tuæ, ut redditâ sibi sanitate, gratiarum tibi in ecclesiâ tuâ referat actionem, per Christum Dominum nostrum.

His finitis faciendo signum crucis et dicendo, In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritûs Sancti, et omnibus persolutis, aquâ lustratâ aspergat lectum dicendo, — "Benedictio Dei omnipotentis Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti descendat super te et maneat semper. Amen."

(*Which may be thus translated:*)

The form to be observed by the Priest in the application of the Sacred Scarf to the sick.

The following words are to be pronounced over the sick person; whilst he kneels before the altar, by the Priest in his scarf, (or holding the scarf,) making the sign of the cross.

V. Blessed be the name of the Lord.—*A.* Both now and evermore.

V. Lord, have mercy upon us.—*A.* Christ, have mercy upon us.

V. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Here follows the Lord's Prayer.

And do thou, holy Hubert, essay thy power in our behalf.—*A.* Pray for us.

V. Restore thy servant (or thy handmaid), O my God.—*A.* Who putteth his (or her) trust in Thee.

V. Lord, hear my prayer.—*A.* And let my cry come unto Thee.

V. The Lord be with thee.—*A.* And with thy spirit.

V. Let us pray.

O God, who art displeased at sin, and relentest on repentance, graciously regard the prayers of thy humble people, and remove the scourges of Thy wrath, which we deserve for our offences, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.—*A.* And with thy Spirit.

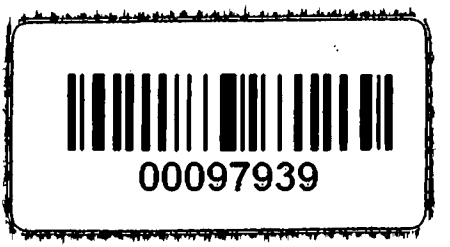
Let us pray.

Almighty Everlasting God, the eternal salvation of believers, hear us, through the intercession of Hubert, in behalf of thy sick servant, (or handmaid,) for whom we entreat Thy merciful assistance, that on the restoration of health he (or she) may offer Thee prayers and thanksgivings in Thy Church, through Christ our Lord.

On the conclusion of this, by making the sign of the cross, and saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," *let him make the incision;* and on the performance of all the rites, let the Priest sprinkle the *couch* of the patient who has been purified with water, saying, "The blessing of God the Father Almighty, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you always." Amen.

THE END.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's-lane.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